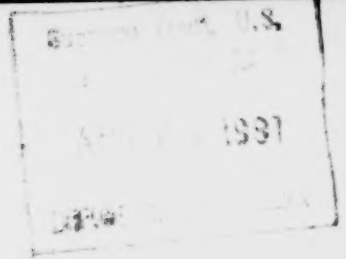


91-342



No. _____

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October Term, 1991

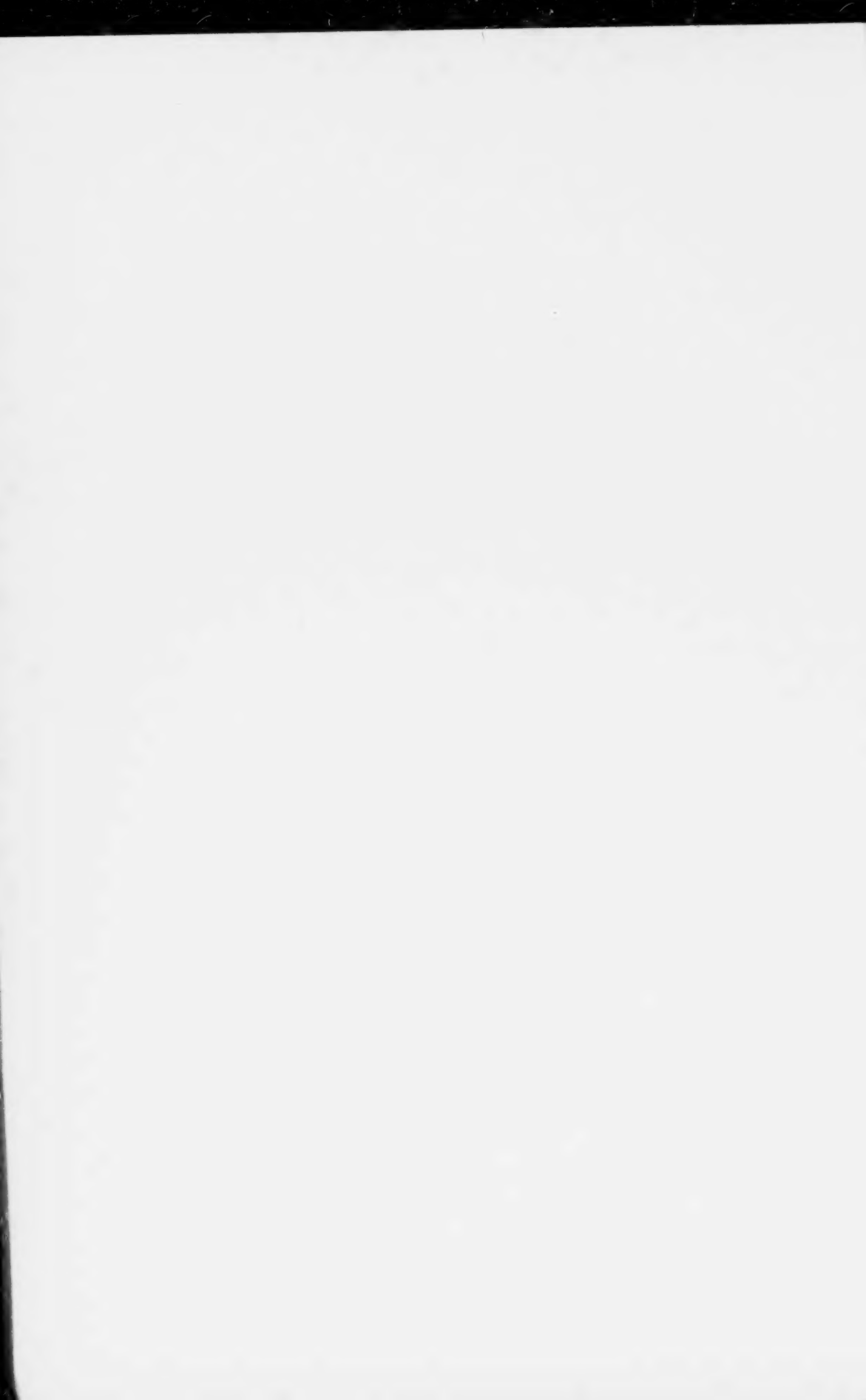
MAHINDER S. UBEROI, Petitioner

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO, Respondent

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO
COLORADO COURT OF APPEALS

MAHINDER S. UBEROI, PRO SE
819 Sixth Street
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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Does petitioner have a federal right to represent himself in state courts to vindicate his state rights and federal civil rights under 42 U.S.C. §1983?
2. Is petitioner denied his XIV Amend. rights of equal protection and due process when the state district court permanently enjoined him from appearing pro se in the district when respondent, as a bystander, filed action alleging that petitioner had failed to prevail on some motions and claims in civil rights and other cases in state and federal courts when respondent was not even a party to some of the cases and had no case or controversy, or standing and the court had no jurisdiction?
3. Was respondent's only remedy, for

petitioner's allegedly frivolous civil rights claims, attorney fees under 42 U.S.C. §1988 in actions where it was a defendant but not a satellite action to permanently enjoin petitioner from appearing pro se in the district?

4. Whether permanent injunction, issued from the bench after severely limited preliminary hearing and without examining hundreds of pages of exhibits admitted into evidence at the hearing, denied due process and equal protection?

5. Is the injunction fatally defective because it states no reason for its issuance and unconstitutionally enjoins petitioner from appearing pro se in a defensive position?

6. Was respondent's case a retaliation against petitioner for his successful

lobbying of state legislature and civil rights litigation against respondent and violated petitioner's I Amend. rights?

7. Was petitioner denied equal protection and due process when the trial judge was disqualified because she had expressed her opinion before the case was filed; she ejected petitioner from courtroom when he objected that she lacked jurisdiction and the case involved review of an underlying case in which her fellow judge is defendant?

8. Did respondent seek equitable relief with unclean hands after committing fraud against courts, federal government and petitioner, and to prevent action against respondent for its continued violations of petitioner's civil rights?

9. Did trial court deny due process by

caking judicial notice of proceedings held elsewhere without due process?

10. Did trial court have jurisdiction to dismiss meritorious compulsory counterclaims for petitioner's failure to proceed through counsel?

11. Whether Court of Appeals' policy and practice of always denying pro se, civil rights or minority appellants' motions for oral argument violated petitioner's rights of equal protection and due process?

12. Did trial and appellate courts deny petitioner meaningful access because of his pro se and/or minority status?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED	i
-------------------------------	---

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES	viii
OPINIONS BELOW	1
JURISDICTION	2
STATEMENT OF THE CASE	3
REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION . .	11

I. Injunction violates petitioner's right to represent himself in state courts to vindicate his state rights and federal civil rights under 42 U.S.C. §1983	11
II. Trial court repeatedly violated petitioner's XIV Amend. rights of equal protection and due process	12
(a) Trial court had no subject matter jurisdiction	13
(b) Respondent has no case or controversy, has not sufficiently pleaded case for injunctive relief, has not met requirements of preliminary injunction and has no standing	15
(c) Injunction is fatally defective and unconstitutional . . .	16
(d) Trial court denied	

	fair hearing to petitioner	17
	(e) Judgment is void for trial judge was disqualified	19
	(f) Trial court lacked jurisdiction to dismiss counterclaims	20
III.	Respondents seek equitable relief with unclean hands after committing fraud against courts, government, petitioner and continued violations of his civil rights	21
	(a) Respondents' fraudulent conduct about Open Records Law	22
	(b) Federal court has ruled that petitioner's action under Federal False Claims Act against respondent is meritorious	26
	(c) Respondents have repeatedly filed fraudulent affidavits and pleadings	27
IV.	Colorado Court of Appeals policy and practice of always denying <u>pro se</u> appellant's motions for oral argument, who are often minority with civil rights claims, violated petitioner's rights of	

equal protection and due process	30
CONCLUSION	31
APPENDIX	al

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases

Berg v. State of Washington, 535 F.2d 505 (CA9, 1978)	14
Board of County Commissioners v. Winslow, 706 P.2d 792 (Colo. 1985)	12, 38-40
Boddie v. Connecticut, 401 U.S. 371 (1971)	31
Bounds, 430 U.S. at 825	12
Cuyahoga Valley Board of Mental Retardation v. Association of Cuyahoga County Teachers of the Trainable Retarded, 351 N.E.2d 777, 783 (Ohio, 1975)	20
Davis v. Board of School Commissioners, 517 F.2d 1044 (CA 5, 1975)	7
Faretta v. California, 422 U.S. 806, n.39 (1975)	11, 12
Glen v. Weltz, 483 So.2d, 1248-9 (La. App. 4th Cir. 1986)	19
Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. v. Hartford Empire Co., 322 U.S. 238, 250 (1944)	21

viii

In re Dolph, 35 P.470 (1891)	18
Martinez v. Winner, 771 F.2d 424, 435 (CA10, 1985)	29
Morello v. James, 810 F.2d 344, 346-7 (CA 2, 1987)	12
N.L.R.B. v. Sears Roebuck & Co., 421 U.S. 132, 165n.30	7
O'Shea v. Littleton, 44 U.S. 488, 503 (1974)	29
Pacific & Southwest Annual Conference of United Methodist Church v. Superior Court, 147 Cal. Rptr. 44 (1978)	5
Parliament Ins. Co. v. Hanson, 676 F.2d 1069, 1075 (CA5, 1982)	7
Pavilonis v. King, 626 F.2d 1075 (CA 1, 1980)	15
People ex rel. Rucker v. District Court, 24 P.260 (Colo. 1890)	14
People v. Carter, 878 F.Supp. 1484 (D.Colo. 1988)	15
People v. Dunlap, 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981)	15, 40
People v. Spencer, 524 P.2d 1057 (Colo. 1988)	15
Rathke v. MacFarlane, 648 P.2d 648 (Colo. 1982)	15

Rio Grande Irrigation & Colonization Co. v. Gildersleeve, 174 U.S. 603	7
Root Refining Co. v. Universal Oil Products Co., 169 F.2d 1514, 534-35 (3rd Cir. 1948)	21
Saunders v. Shaw, 244 U.S. 317 (1917)	19
The Colorado Civil Rights Commission ex rel. Reyes Ramos v. the Regents of the University of Colorado, 759 P.2d 726 (Colo. 1988)	9
Thompson v. Madison County Bd. of Ed., 476 F.2d 676, 678 (CA5, 1973)	19
Tripati v. Baumann, 878 F.2d 351, 352 (CA10, 1989)	11
U.S. v. Grinnel Corp., 384 U.S. 563, 583 (1976)	7
Uberoi v. Ellefson, et al., 89 CA 377	30
Uberoi v. Richtel, D.Colo. 87-Z-961 .	20, 25, 26
Uberoi v. University of Colorado Board of Regents, 85 CV 2080-2	13, 24
Uberoi v. University of Colorado Board of Regents, et al., 90 CA 17	30
Uberoi v. University of Colorado et al., Boulder District Court Case No. 83 CV 625, 27	

x

Uberoi v. University of Colorado et al., D.Colo. 82 M/LW 806	26, 27
Uberoi v. University of Colorado, 686 P.2d 785 (Colo. 1984)	23
Uberoi v. University of Colorado, 713 P.2d 894 (Colo. 1986)	9
Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al., 88 CA 714	30
United States v. Ritter, 540 F.2d 459 (CA 10.)	6
Whatcomb County v. Kane, 640 P.2d 1075 (Wash. App. 1982)	16
Woodson v. Ingram, 477 P.2d 455 (1970)	18

Constitutional Provisions

Colo. Const. Art VI, §9	13
I Amendment	iii, 12
XIV Amendment	17

Statutes

18 U.S.C. §241	28
18 U.S.C. §242	28, 29
28 U.S.C. §1257(a)	3

42 U.S.C. §1983	i, 9, 11
42 U.S.C. §1988	16
C.A.R. 34	31
C.R.C.P. (3) (a)	20
C.R.C.P. 65(d)	16
C.R.C.P. §22	6
C.R.C.P. §121-1-16	6
C.R.S. §2-4-203	23
C.R.S. §13-5-131	14
C.R.S. §13-6-310	13
C.R.S. §24-6-402(1)	9
C.R.S. §24-72-202(1.5)	9, 24
C.R.S. §121-1-10	21
C.R.S. §132	14

Rules

Rule 54(b)	10
Rule 59	28

xii

Other

17 C.J.S. Contempt, §10	26
Colorado Legislative Council Research Publication No. 126 (1967) at 56 . .	22
Prosser and Keeton on Tort, West Pub. 1984	15

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

October, 1991

MAHINDER S. UBEROI, petitioner

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO, respondent

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO
COLORADO COURT OF APPEALS

The petitioner, Mahinder S. Uberoi, respectfully, prays that a writ of certiorari issue to review the judgment and opinion of Colorado Court of Appeals entered on October 19, 1990, denied rehearing on November 23, 1990. Colorado Supreme Court denied certiorari on April 13, 1991.

OPINIONS BELOW

The opinion of Colorado Court of

Appeals and the decision of District Court of Boulder County, Colorado have not been reported. They are reprinted in the appendix hereto.

JURISDICTION

On August 17, 1988, respondent filed action in Boulder County District Court, Colorado, to permanently enjoin petitioner from appearing pro se in the district alleging that he had failed to prevail on some motions and civil rights and other claims in state and federal courts. On December 27, 1988, the court granted preliminary and permanent injunction. On October 19, 1990, Colorado Court of Appeals affirmed and denied rehearing on November 23, 1990. Colorado Supreme Court denied certiorari on April 13, 1991.

The jurisdiction of this court is invoked under 28 U.S.C. §1257(a). On August 5, 1991, Justice White extended the time to file the petition to and including August 23, 1991.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Petitioner is a male of Asian Indian origin, U.S. citizen, distinguished tenured professor and 3-term past chairman of Department of Aerospace Engineering at University of Colorado, see Who's Who in America, and Who's Who in the World, current editions.

Respondent Board of Regents of University of Colorado filed a complaint asking Boulder County district court to review petitioner's concluded or pending cases, 2 civil rights cases in federal district court and some civil rights and other

cases in state courts, and to permanently enjoin him from appearing pro se in XX Judicial District of Colorado because he has failed to prevail on some motions or claims which wasted judicial resources.

Regents originally filed the case for injunction disguised as a motion in a concluded case, Uberoi v. University of Colorado et al., Boulder District Court Case No. 83 CV 625. On June 1, 1988, at hearing on the motion, Trial Judge Roxanne Bailin confessed that she lacked jurisdiction, denied the motion and asked respondents to file an independent complaint, the instance action. However, on June 1, 1988, she expressed her opinion before it was filed.

It appears to me that Dr. Uberoi has become fixated and focussed on litigation as a way of life and to the extent that he has drawn the

rest of us into it, we are entitled to protection.

Where a judge gratuitously offers an opinion on a matter not yet pending before him and thereby shows a bias or prejudice against a party, a writ of mandamus will issue precluding a judge from hearing that matter.

Pacific & Southwest Annual Conference of United Methodist Church v. Superior Court, 147 Cal. Rptr. 44 (1978).

On January 1, 1988, petitioner was pleading his case when Judge Bailin ruled:

I refuse to listen to any more from you...when I said you were persistent and perverse, I was underestimating you, and I refuse to listen any more about this case. And I appreciate your leaving at this time.

The hearing continued ex parte after petitioner was ejected. Judge Bailin demonstrated extreme prejudice and hostility towards petitioner which was racially motivated.

Even though the judge's demeanor and treatment of counsel may not be sufficiently adverse to cause the judge's disqualification for bias, it may still be proper for him to recuse himself...where the interest of justice may require that the cause be tried before another judge... . United States v. Ritter, 540 F.2d 459 (CA 10.)

Moreover, Judge Bailin's pervasive bias and prejudice is shown by otherwise judicial conduct and constitutes bias against petitioner. E.g., she has destroyed or refused to protect court records of petitioner's cases; she instantly approved respondents' affidavit of Bill of Cost and proposed order without giving petitioner an opportunity to respond to the Bill or object to the form of the proposed order. C.R.C.P. §§121-1-16 and 22, allow 15 days in which an opposing party may object or otherwise respond.

A duly authorized rule of court has the power of law, and is binding upon the court as well as upon parties to an action, and cannot be dispensed with to suit the circumstances of any particular case. Rio Grande Irrigation & Colonization Co. v. Gildersleeve, 174 U.S. 603.

She denied petitioner the "privilege" to file motion for reconsideration of her clearly erroneous ruling because there is no such motion.

A court of equity may always amend its decree on a proper showing. N.L.R.B. v. Sears Roebuck & Co., 421 U.S. 132, 165n.30.

The general rule is that bias sufficient to disqualify a judge must stem from extra judicial source. U.S. v. Grinnel Corp., 384 U.S. 563, 583 (1976). In Davis v. Board of School Commissioners, 517 F.2d 1044 (CA 5, 1975), cert. denied, 425 U.S. 944 (1976), however, the court recognized that there is an exception where such pervasive bias and prejudice is shown by otherwise judicial conduct as would constitute bias. Parliament Ins. Co. v. Hanson, 676 F.2d 1069, 1075 (CA5, 1982).

Judge Bailin denied motions to disqualify her.

Petitioner moved to dismiss and/or strike complaint for (1) lack of jurisdiction over subject matter pending or decided by federal courts, appellate courts and other divisions of trial court, (2) lack of standing of respondents, (3) failure to allege the basic requisites for injunctive relief - the likelihood of substantial and immediate irreparable injury and inadequacy of remedies at law, and (4) complaint is redundant and immaterial. The motion was denied.

Petitioner answered and asserted 9 compulsory counterclaims. The instance case is a retaliation against petitioner for his civil rights actions, in federal

and state courts which subjected respondents to 42 U.S.C. §1983, see Uberoi v. University of Colorado, 713 P.2d 894 (Colo. 1986) and petitioner's lobbying of state legislature which subjected respondents to Open Records Law, see C.R.S. §24-72-202(1.5) and to Open Meetings Law, see C.R.S. §24-6-402(1), and helped to subject it to the jurisdiction of Colorado Civil Rights Commission, see The Colorado Civil Rights Commission ex rel. Reyes Ramos v. the Regents of the University of Colorado, 759 P.2d 726 (Colo. 1988).

Petitioner also sought declaratory judgment that respondent has maliciously and without jurisdiction revived and expanded cases which have been brought to authorized conclusions and sought

preliminary and permanent injunction to enjoin it from filing such complaints without seeking permission from District Court and serving a copy of the petition for permission on petitioner.

Judge Bailin held a truncated hearing for about 2 hours and, without examining hundreds of pages of documents admitted into evidence, issued permanent injunction from the bench which was later memorialized. See Appendix hereinbelow.

Colorado Court of Appeals dismissed appeal since counterclaims were pending and injunction was not certified under Rule 54(b). Colorado Supreme Court granted certiorari and later, on respondents' confession, ordered trial court to certify injunction under Rule 54(b). On remand trial court granted

respondent's motion to dismiss counterclaims since petitioner had not hired an attorney to prosecute them. Colorado Court of Appeal affirmed injunction and dismissal of counterclaims, and denied rehearing. Colorado Supreme Court denied certiorari. See Appendix hereinbelow.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION

I.

Injunction violates petitioner's right to represent himself in state courts to vindicate his state rights and federal civil rights under 42 U.S.C. §1983

The Founders believed that self-representation was basic right of a free people. Faretta v. California, 422 U.S. 806, n.39 (1975).

District Court cannot impose burdensome conditions on a litigant as to deny him meaningful access to the courts. Tripati v. Baumann, 878 F.2d 351, 352

(CA10, 1989).

Sources of right of access include I Amend., due process clauses of V & XIV Amends. and Privileges & Immunities Clauses of Art. IV, §2. The right of access to the courts is substantive rather than procedural. Its exercise can be shaped and guided by the state, Bounds, 430 U.S. at 825, but cannot be obstructed... . Morello v. James, 810 F.2d 344, 346-7 (CA 2, 1987).

Board of County Commissioners v. Winslow, 706 P.2d 792 (Colo. 1985) disregards Faretta, legislative history of federal and state constitutions and forbids pro se filing with a conclusory statement that it does not infringe on constitutional rights since a litigant may hire an attorney to represent him.

II.

**Trial court repeatedly violated
petitioner's XIV Amend. rights
of equal protection and due
process**

(a)

**Trial court had no subject matter
jurisdiction**

Respondents asked trial court to review petitioner's cases in other courts or other divisions of the same court and enjoin him from appearing pro se in XX Judicial District of Colorado. District Court is a trial court, Colo. Const. Art VI, §9. The only appellate jurisdiction it has is over County Court. C.R.S. §13-6-310.

It certainly has no jurisdiction to entertain a complaint based on allegations of petitioner's conduct in federal courts.

The only active case pending in the District, Uberoi v. University of Colorado Board of Regents et al., 85 CV

2080-2, was assigned to Judge Sandstead. Judge Bailin lacked jurisdiction to enjoin petitioner from appearing pro se before Judge Sandstead. See C.R.S. §§13-5-131 and 132, power of a single judge in multiple judge districts.

Each judge must exercise all the powers and functions of the court. Two or more judges...cannot share or divide such responsibility. People ex rel. Rucker v. District Court, 24 P.260 (Colo. 1890).

Where injunction sought in one court proceeding would interfere with another court proceeding, considerations of comity require more than the usual measure of restraint, and injunction should be granted in the most unusual cases, particularly where the courts are of coordinate jurisdiction and subject to review by the same Court of Appeals. Berg v. State of Washington, 535 F.2d 505 (CA9, 1978).

(b)

Respondent has no case or controversy, has not sufficiently pleaded case for injunctive relief, has not met requirements of preliminary injunction

and has no standing

Proof of litigiousness will not support injunction. Pavilonis v. King, 626 F.2d 1075 (CA 1, 1980). Respondent has not pleaded the prerequisite of the issuance of preliminary injunction. See Rathke v. MacFarlane, 648 P.2d 648 (Colo. 1982). It has adequate remedy at law.

There is no liability where the defendant has done nothing more than carry out the process to its authorized conclusion, even though with bad intentions. [Citations omitted, Prosser and Keeton on Tort, p. 898, 1984, Wes. Pub.]

Respondent has no standing, certainly not on allegation of petitioner's conduct in cases to which it was not a party. It cites People v. Dunlap, 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981), People v. Spencer, 524 P.2d 1057 (Colo. 1988), and People v. Carter, 878 F.Supp. 1484

(D.Colo. 1988). However, it is not authorized to bring actions on behalf of people.

Congress provided attorney fees under 42 U.S.C. 1988 as the sole remedy for allegedly frivolous civil rights claims and permanent injunction would violate congressional policy of encouraging such actions by "private attorneys general."

(c)

**Injunction is fatally defective
and unconstitutional**

Injunction does not state any reasons for its issuance as required by C.R.C.P. 65(d), see Appendix hereinbelow. Whatcomb County v. Kane, 640 P.2d 1075 (Wash. App. 1982) vacated a similar injunction.

It is unconstitutionally broad since

it prohibits petitioner from appearing pro se in small claims court which is designed for *pro se* litigants, and it prohibits him from appearing *pro se* in a defensive position and violates equal protection and due process clauses of XIV Amend.

(d)

**Trial court denied fair hearing
to petitioner**

Trial court held an expedited hearing on preliminary injunction over petitioner's objection that he did not have adequate time to prepare for the hearing which would involve review of 8 different civil actions, some of which were concluded years ago.

Hearing started at about 2:00 p.m. Respondents submitted hundreds of pages of pleadings and partial records from 8

cases which were admitted into evidence over petitioner's objections of surprise and that pleadings were hearsay, some of which were later amended. After about one hour, court recessed for about one hour. Trial court cut petitioner's testimony and ordered him to collect and submit, in 2 or 3 minutes, all his exhibits. Within the time allowed, petitioner submitted 27 exhibits which were admitted en masse and their identification by petitioner was not allowed.

Due process implies reasonable opportunity to defend rights. In re Dolph, 35 P.470 (1891), Woodson v. Ingram, 477 P.2d 455 (1970).

Without examining the documents admitted into evidence, trial court, from

the bench, issued permanent injunction.

Before a district court adjudges, it must determine the facts itself on the basis of proffered evidence. Thompson v. Madison County Bd. of Ed., 476 F.2d 676, 678 (CA5, 1973).

Where a case has been decided by the state supreme court in such a way that a party had not had a proper opportunity to present his evidence, he has been denied due process. Saunders v. Shaw, 244 U.S. 317 (1917).

Assuming arguendo that petitioner was accorded due process:

Injunction issued after summary proceedings is temporary regardless of how it is entitled or worded. Glen v. Weltz, 483 So.2d, 1248-9 (La.App. 4th Cir. 1986).

(e)

**Judgment is void for trial judge
was disqualified**

Trial judge was disqualified on several independent grounds. *Supra*.
Moreover, respondents alleged that petitioner should be enjoined from appearing pro se in XX Judicial District

of Colorado because of his conduct in Uberoi v. Richtel, D.Colo. 87-Z-961 which was dismissed as moot, each side to pay its own costs and attorney fees. Judge Bailin was disqualified from reviewing that case since Richtel is a fellow judge, and her impartiality might reasonably be questioned. Canon 3(C).

[d]esign and purpose of the Code [of Judicial Conduct] were to impose a conduct upon the judges to which they must conform... . And like the attempt of a judge to exercise judicial power when prohibited by state or federal statutes, we find that such attempt [to proceed in violation of the Code] was void. Cuyahoga Valley Board of Mental Retardation v. Association of Cuyahoga County Teachers of the Trainable Retarded, 351 N.E.2d 777, 783 (Ohio, 1975).

(f)

**Trial court lacked jurisdiction to
dismiss counterclaims**

Pursuant to C.R.C.P. (3)(a)

petitioner was required to plead his compulsory counterclaims in his answer.

On respondents' motion, trial court dismissed counterclaims for failure to prosecute without waiting the 15 days during which petitioner is entitled to respond. C.R.S. §121-1-10 and there was activity of record in 12 continuous months. Sub. §(3).

III.

**Respondents seek equitable relief with
unclean hands after committing fraud
against courts, government, petitioner
and continued violations of his civil
rights**

No principle is better settled than the maxim that he who comes into equity must come with clean hands and keep them clean throughout the course of litigation, and if he violates this rule, he must be denied all relief whatever may have been the merits of his claim.
Hazel-Atlas Glass Co. v. Hartford Empire Co., 322 U.S. 238, 250 (1944). Root Refining Co. v. Universal Oil Products Co., 169 F.2d

1514, 534-35 (3rd Cir. 1948).

In support of its action for permanent injunction against petitioner, respondent cited proceedings in other cases which actually established it and others engaged in unlawful conduct against petitioner.

(a)

**Respondents' fraudulent conduct about
Open Records Law**

Open Records Law was enacted after a year long study and respondent agreed to accept it, Colorado Legislative Council Research Publication No. 126 (1967) at 56. On January 29, 1970, President of University of Colorado wrote to petitioner and all other chairmen and deans:

The "Open Records Act," An act providing for inspection of public records...has been given legal

interpretation by John P. Holloway as resident legal counsel.... . It shall be the policy of the University of Colorado to observe the requirements of this Act.

Respondents denied access to its public records after petitioner discovered it practiced racial discrimination and defrauded his and other grants from the U.S. It fraudulently claimed the "institution" in the Act does not show legislative intent to encompass it. Disregarding legislative history in violation of C.R.S. §2-4-203, the Court agreed. 686 P.2d 785 (Colo. 1984).

Petitioner lobbied the legislature. Within weeks, the senate by unanimous vote and the house with one dissenting vote legislated that "institution" was always intended to include respondent.

See C.R.S. §24-72-202(1.5).

Even so, respondent denied inspection of its public records claiming they were records of "private corporations," e.g., The University Improvement Corp., wholly controlled by respondent, and the disclosure would do public harm.

After a show cause hearing in Uberoi v. University of Colorado et al., Boulder D.Ct. 85 CV 2080-2, Judge Richtel ruled that respondent shall within 10 days permit access to most of the records in question. He further ruled:

[legislature] simply amended the statute in response to Plaintiff's case in the Supreme Court to include the University as an institution...
. I just don't think the legislature would have passed it had it thought about it as far as the impact on the University... I'm going to grant a stay on that judgment...at least until the

parties have sought a writ from the Supreme Court.

Colorado Supreme Court denied petitioner's petition, as expected, since it has no authority to suspend a constitutionally firm statute because it displeases a trial judge.

Uberoi v Richtel, D.Colo., 87-Z-961 alleged that Richtel seized, in violation of Amend. IV, petitioner's privileged documents and otherwise denied meaningful access to court and his conduct was willfully unlawful and racially motivated.

At pretrial time, Richtel moved to dismiss stating he was assigned to criminal docket and fraudulently stating that petitioner's civil cases would not come before him. He is a judge of court of general jurisdiction and cannot be

confined to criminal docket. He was rotated to civil docket, and petitioner's cases did come before him.

17 C.J.S. Contempt, §10, p. 22

states the rule:

[o]btaining court order by fraud or
deceit...is contempt... .
[Citations omitted.]

87-Z-961 was dismissed with
prejudice as moot and each side to pay
its own costs and attorney's fees.

(b)

**Federal court has ruled that petitioner's
action under Federal False Claims Act
against respondent is meritorious**

Uberoi v. University of Colorado et
al., D.Colo. 82 M/LW 806 held:

This court is not, however,
convinced that information possessed
by the government would have
revealed that it was being charged
for (1) equipment defendants
otherwise acquired free; (2) salary
amount beyond the cost sharing
requirements, and (3) inflated
research costs... . Thus, plaintiff

pro se's action based on Federal False Claim Act should not be dismissed.

Petitioner mostly prevailed or accepted offers of judgment from defendants in other cases.

(c)

Respondents have repeatedly filed fraudulent affidavits and pleadings

E.g., Uberoi v. University of Colorado et al., D.Colo. 82 M/LW 806, ruled that respondent's counsels T.D. Ayres and R.A. Tharp had filed fraudulent affidavits for attorney fees by including fees for actions in state court.

Uberoi v. University of Colorado et al., Boulder District Court, 83 CV 625, denied attorney fees and costs by omitting any reference to these matters in the judgment, and parties did not move to amend the judgment within 15 days

under Rule 59. Respondent fraudulently stated to Colorado Court of Appeals that trial court had not resolved the issue of attorney fees which improvidently dismissed the appeal but did not remand the case. Respondent fraudulently stated in trial court that Colorado Court of Appeals has remanded the case for determination of attorney fees.

Respondent's counsels Elizabeth McCann, Beverly Fulton and John Mann conspired with Judge Bailin to fraudulently assume jurisdiction and willfully violate, on grounds of race, petitioner's rights to due process and equal protection. This violated 18 U.S.C. §§241 and 242, proscribing conspiracy against federal rights of citizens and proscribing deprivation of

rights under color of law. Trial court should have referred this matter to U.S. Attorney for Colorado.

Judges who would willfully discriminate on the grounds of race or otherwise would willfully deprive citizen of his constitutional rights...must take account of 18 U.S.C. §242. O'Shea v. Littleton, 44 U.S. 488, 503 (1974).

Petitioner was never deposed.

Respondent confessed that it filed a fraudulent affidavit to recover costs of his deposition. Trial court should have referred this matter to District Attorney.

Judge...had duty to notify proper authorities if he felt that a crime was being committed. Martinez v. Winner, 771 F.2d 424, 435 (CA10, 1985). [Vacated on other grounds.]

Respondent fraudulently claimed that petitioner's designation of record on appeal was contempt of trial court, and

he should be imprisoned for a term not exceeding six months.

In spite of petitioner's tenured professorship, respondent continues to prohibit him, on racially discriminatory basis, from doing any teaching or research, and the injunction is designed to prevent him from vindicating his rights.

IV.

Colorado Court of Appeals policy and practice of always denying pro se appellant's motions for oral argument, who are often minority with civil rights claims, violated petitioner's right of equal protection and due process

Court of Appeals denied petitioner's motions for oral argument in this case, Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al., 88 CA 714, Uberoi v. Ellefson, et al., 89 CA 377, and Uberoi v. University of Colorado Board of Regents, et al., 90 CA

17, regardless of the merits. Under C.A.R. 34 oral argument shall be allowed upon request or the court's own motions. The court clerk has been unable to cite a single case where a non-attorney pro se appellant was allowed oral argument.

A statute or a rule may be constitutionally invalid, as applied, when it operates to deprive an individual of a protected right, even though its general validity as a measure enacted in the legitimate exercise of state power is beyond question. Boddie v. Connecticut, 401 U.S. 371 (1971).

Court of Appeals has refused to assign petitioner's cases by lot to one of its three judge panels.

CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, this petition for certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

Mahinder S. Uberoi
MAHINDER S. UBEROI, pro se

APPENDIX

DISTRICT COURT, BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

No. 88 CV 1545-5

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
COLORADO

v.

MAHINDER S. UBEROI.

ORDER

This matter came on for hearing on December 16, 1988. The Court made oral findings of fact and conclusions of law and issued an injunction prohibiting Mahinder S. Uberoi from filing paperwork of any nature in any current or future pending case in the Twentieth Judicial District or filing any new case in the Twentieth Judicial District except matters relating to appeal or post-judgment proceedings unless he has an

a2

attorney who enters his or her appearance in any such case.

The stay is effective January 16, 1989. Mr. Uberoi was granted a thirty-day stay on filing any paperwork due in any pending case.

By the Court
ROXANNE BAILIN

Dated: 12-27-88

**DISTRICT COURT, COUNTY OF BOULDER, STATE
OF COLORADO**

Case No. 88 CV 1545-5

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
COLORADO,

Plaintiff

v.

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,

Defendant.

RE: AMENDED INJUNCTION

It having come to the Court's attention by its rereading the written injunction dated December 27, 1988, that

some ambiguity may be present in said order, the Court now amends it to make clear that Mahinder Uberoi is enjoined from representing himself in any manner in the Twentieth Judicial District beginning January 16, 1989, except in post-judgment collection proceedings or appeals.

By the Court
ROXANNE BAILIN
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

DATED: January 23, 1989.

COLORADO COURT OF APPEALS

No. 89 CA 0124

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
COLORADO,

Plaintiff-Appellee,
v.

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the District Court of Boulder
County No. 88 CV 1545-5

judicial process. Defendant eventually responded by answering and asserting several counterclaims.

In December, 1988, the trial court held a hearing on the injunction. Each party was allowed to argue and present evidence in support of its position. From the bench, at the end of the hearing, the trial court issued detailed findings of fact and an injunction that prohibited defendant from filing any documents pro se in pending cases in the Twentieth District, and from filing any new pro se cases in the District. A written order, later amended, followed.

Defendant immediately appealed the order to this court. However, because defendant 's counterclaims remained pending in the trial court, it was

a6

dismissed for lack of certification under C.R.C.P. 54(b). Thereafter, defendant filed a petition for certiorari with the Colorado Supreme Court on the C.R.C.P. 54(b) issue.

Although the petition was originally denied, the Colorado Supreme Court later granted it on his motion for reconsideration. The Supreme Court, however, withdrew the writ because defendant had an unresolved motion for reconsideration pending in the Court of Appeals at the time that he filed his petition for writ of certiorari. The case was remanded to the Court of Appeals, and then to the trial court, where defendant's counterclaims were dismissed for his failure to prosecute. This appeal followed.

I.

Defendant first contends that the trial court lacked jurisdiction to enter the injunction. He argues that the order denies him his constitutional right of access to the courts. We disagree.

In Board of County Commissioners v. Winslow, 706 P.2d 792 (Colo. 1985) cert. denied, 475 U.S. 1018 (1986), the Colorado Supreme Court held that a trial court has the authority to enjoin pro se litigation within its own judicial district in order to prevent a serious abuse of judicial resources. The court noted:

"forbidding a party from filing pro se does not infringe upon his constitutional right of access to the courts because he still may obtain access to judicial relief by employing an attorney authorized to practice in the State of Colorado."

a8

Winslow is dispositive of defendant's first contention here. The trial court in this matter enjoined defendant from initiating or maintaining pro se actions within its judicial district after it determined that he had seriously abused the judicial process.

II.

Defendant next claims that even if the court had the authority to restrain him from representing himself, it erred in ordering an injunction here. We disagree.

In several cases prior to Winslow, the Colorado Supreme Court enjoined parties from appearing pro se in courts of this State. See People v. Dunlap, 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981); Board of County Commissioners v. Barday, 197 Colo. 519,

594 P.2d 1057 (1979); Shotkin v. Kaplan,
116 Colo. 295, 180 P.2d 1021 (1947).

In each case, the court balanced the litigant's right of access to the courts against other litigants' and the general public's interests in protecting judicial resources from the "deleterious impact of repetitious, baseless pro se litigation." Winslow, supra.

The supreme court in Dunlap concluded that an injunction was appropriate when pro se litigants filed numerous groundless actions against public officials for conduct within the scope of the officials' duties. The court held that the litigants had no right to burden court resources further without the guidance of counsel.

Similarly, in Barday, the court

found the judicial system unduly burdened by Barday's pro se claims against county commissioners, judges, attorneys, the City of Boulder, and the State of Colorado. The court found that Barday had unnecessarily expanded proceedings involving marital problems into several lawsuits based on factually and legally unsupported allegations that the various officials deprived him of his rights. The court found that he, too, required guidance of legal counsel.

Likewise, the trial court in this matter balanced defendant's right to represent himself against the strain it put on court resources. It reviewed the pleadings of the eight cases filed by defendant and found that in each case, defendant had filed motions that

unnecessarily expanded the proceedings - motions for reconsideration and clarification as well as motions for disqualification of judges and attorneys who disagreed with him. Further, if defendant was unsuccessful in the motions for disqualification, he filed lawsuits against the judges or attorneys.

In addition, the court found that almost without exception the claims were determined to be frivolous, groundless, or otherwise dismissable. On the few occasions that defendant may have had meritorious claims, the court observed that those claims were lost "in vexatious and groundless litigation."

The court concluded that the defendant filed actions without regard for the merits, and that the minor

a12

matters on which he was successful were offset by the thousands of dollars of attorney fees assessed against him. The court found that the interests of other litigants and the general public were adversely affected by the defendant's use of judicial resources without guidance of counsel and that defendant needs an attorney to protect both the system and his own interests.

We conclude that the trial court applied the proper test in determining that the defendant had seriously abused the judicial process. And, inasmuch as those findings have support in the record, they will not be disturbed on review. See Gebhardt v. Gebhardt, 198 Colo. 28, 595 P.2d 1048 (1979).

III. -

Defendant next argues that he was not afforded due process in the manner in which the injunction proceeding was held. He claims that the trial court erred in denying his request for a continuance of the hearing and in holding "expedited" proceedings. We perceive no infringement of defendant's right to due process.

Due process requires that no person be deprived of a valuable right without adequate notice and the opportunity to be heard. In re Marriage of Franks, 189 Colo. 490, 542 P.2d 845 (1975).

Here, a complaint for injunctive relief was served on defendant in August, 1988. The University provided defendant with the exhibits it intended to use in support of the injunction first in June, 1988, and again in August, 1988. The

a14

University also filed a similar complaint in U.S. District Court. The exhibits in both cases consisted of the pleadings and court orders in the six state and two federal cases to which defendant was a party. The hearing took place December 16, 1988.

Since defendant had the exhibits to review and was aware of the grounds for the injunction for at least three months before the hearing and since he was personally familiar with each of the exhibits, we conclude that he had adequate notice.

Other than the time it took for the University to present its exhibits, defendant had the entire afternoon to argue and present evidence in opposition to the injunction. Defendant spent much

of this time arguing with the court on matters previously concluded or irrelevant to the injunction and reviewing documents to determine which to offer as evidence.

The trial court provided defendant with adequate notice of the time, date, and length of the injunction hearing. Defendant should have been prepared for the hearing prior to the afternoon of December 16, 1988.

Defendant was permitted to admit exhibits into evidence and was furnished more than sufficient time to present his position to the trial court. We therefore find that the second requirement of due process, opportunity to be heard, was also met.

IV.

a16

Defendant next argues that the trial court improperly dismissed his counterclaims. We disagree.

The trial court dismissed defendant's counterclaims upon motion by the University under C.R.C.P. 121 §1-10. Defendant did not file a response to the University's motion.

C.R.C.P. 121 §1-10 provides that a party may apply to the court to dismiss an action when the action has not been prosecuted or brought to trial with due diligence. See also C.R.C.P. 41(b)(1).

The power to dismiss a matter for failure to prosecute is within the sound discretion of the trial court. And, an unusual delay in prosecution may justify such a dismissal. Lake Meredith Reservoir Co. v. Amity Mutual Irrigation

Co., 698 P.2d 1340 (Colo. 1985).

Here, defendant failed to obtain counsel and take any action relating to his counterclaims from December, 1988, when the injunction was issued, to October, 1989, when they were dismissed. Moreover, he did not offer reasons to the court to explain the ten months of inaction. Consequently, we find that the trial court did not abuse its discretion.

Defendant has presented numerous other contentions of error. We have considered them all and find that they are without merit.

Accordingly, the trial court's injunction and judgment of dismissal are affirmed.

JUDGE PIERCE and JUDGE TURSI concur.

a18

THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF
COLORADO

Case No. 89 CA 0124

BOARD OF REGENTS ET AL v. MAHINDER S.

UBEROI

ORDER

Upon consideration of the Petition for Rehearing filed by the Appellant herein, said Petition is hereby DENIED. It is ordered that issuance of the Mandate hereby be, and the same hereby is, stayed to and including December 24, 1990, provided that if a Petition for Writ of Certiorari is timely filed with the Supreme Court of the State of Colorado, the stay shall remain in effect until disposition of the within cause by the Supreme Court.

J. PLANK
J. PIERCE
J. TURSI

Dated: November 23, 1990

SUPREME COURT, STATE OF COLORADO

Case No. 90 SC 752

Certiorari to the Colorado Court of
Appeals 89 CA 0124
Boulder County District Court 88 CV
1545-5

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner
v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
COLORADO,
Respondent.

ORDER OF THE COURT

Upon consideration of the Petition
for Writ of Certiorari to the Colorado
Court of Appeals, and after review of the
record, the briefs, and the opinion of
said Court of Appeals,

IT IS THIS DAY ORDERED that said

a20

Petition for Writ of Certiorari shall be,
and the same hereby is, DENIED.

BY THE COURT, EN BANC, APRIL 15,
1991.

CHIEF JUSTICE ROVIRA does not
participate.

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner,

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO,
Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to
the Colorado Court of Appeals

**MOTION OF PUBLIC CITIZEN FOR LEAVE
TO FILE BRIEF *AMICUS CURIAE* IN SUPPORT
OF PETITIONER AND FOR EXTENSION OF
TIME IN WHICH TO FILE**

Brian Wolfman
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Public Citizen

September 26, 1991



IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

No. 91-342

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner,

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO,
Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to
the Colorado Court of Appeals

**MOTION OF PUBLIC CITIZEN FOR LEAVE
TO FILE BRIEF *AMICUS CURIAE* IN SUPPORT
OF PETITIONER AND FOR EXTENSION OF
TIME IN WHICH TO FILE**

Movant Public Citizen hereby seeks leave to file a brief *amicus curiae* in support of petitioner's Petition for Writ of Certiorari and an extension of time until October 18, 1991 to do so. The Petition in this case -- which was filed on August 21, 1991 -- seeks review of a decision of the Colorado Court of Appeals that affirmed an injunction barring petitioner from filing any "paperwork of any nature" on a *pro se* basis in the Twentieth Judicial District of Colorado. The case did not

come to our attention until September 12, 1991, when one of our staff attorneys noted a brief description of the Petition in *United States Law Week*. Thereafter, a staff member obtained a copy of the Petition from the Clerk of the Court and prepared a memorandum, which was reviewed by undersigned counsel on September 24, 1991. Upon reading this memorandum, we immediately recognized the potential importance of this case and contacted the petitioner, who has consented to the extension of time requested herein and to the filing of a brief *amicus curiae* on his behalf.*

Public Citizen is a nationwide consumer advocacy organization with over 100,000 members. Of particular interest to our membership over the years have been issues of open government and access to the courts, which concern the ability of the citizenry to participate in the political process and to petition the Government for redress of grievances. Thus, we have supported the right of individuals to represent themselves in court and before administrative agencies and to be assisted by paralegals and other lay advocates in certain circumstances. Further, Public Citizen's Litigation Group is a co-author of *Representing Yourself -- What You Can Do Without A Lawyer* (Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 4th Printing 1987), which offers advice on how to represent oneself in a variety of personal and business matters, from buying and selling a house to incorporating a small business to in-court representation in certain circumstances.

* A copy of petitioner's written consent has been lodged with the Clerk. The attorney for respondent, Beverly Fulton, has informed the undersigned counsel of record that respondent does not consent to an extension of time and does not consent to the filing of an *amicus curiae* brief, on the ground that such a brief would be out of time. Ms. Fulton also has stated that respondent does not, at this time, intend to respond to the Petition. We also note that an extension of time would not prejudice respondent, which is benefitting from the injunction during the pendency of petitioner's appeals.

We are therefore extremely concerned about the virtually unlimited scope of the injunction issued by the District Court of Boulder County, Colorado (Pet. A1-A3), and affirmed by the Colorado Court of Appeals (A3-A17). That order forever bars petitioner from participating *pro se* in any state court litigation in the county in which he resides, not only involving respondent University of Colorado, but any other person whatsoever. Although the injunction expressly excludes post-judgment collection proceedings and appeals (presumably of the injunction itself), its breadth is extraordinary. For example, petitioner may not, on a *pro se* basis, initiate, or even defend, any court action in the Twentieth Judicial District of Colorado, nor may he even seek leave to file an action or pleading in any proceeding. Presumably, petitioner may not seek a divorce or defend a divorce action against him, unless he hires a lawyer. Indeed, by the plain terms of the injunction, petitioner may not even move to alter or amend the scope of the injunction itself. And, as petitioner has pointed out (Pet. 17), he is absolutely barred from maintaining or defending a case in small claims court, where, by law, litigants may *only* proceed *pro se*.

We believe that the decision of the Colorado Court of Appeals cannot be squared with the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause, the First Amendment's rights to free speech and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances, and this Court's prior decisions regarding the constitutional right of access to the courts. We need time to conduct additional research, review the entire record, and to assure ourselves that the issues of importance to us are properly presented by the Petition. We also believe that this Court will benefit from an *amicus* brief at the *certiorari* stage because the petitioner is proceeding *pro se* before this Court and is not himself an attorney. We ask therefore that this Motion be granted and that movant Public Citizen be allowed until October 18, 1991 to file a brief *amicus curiae* in support of petitioner.

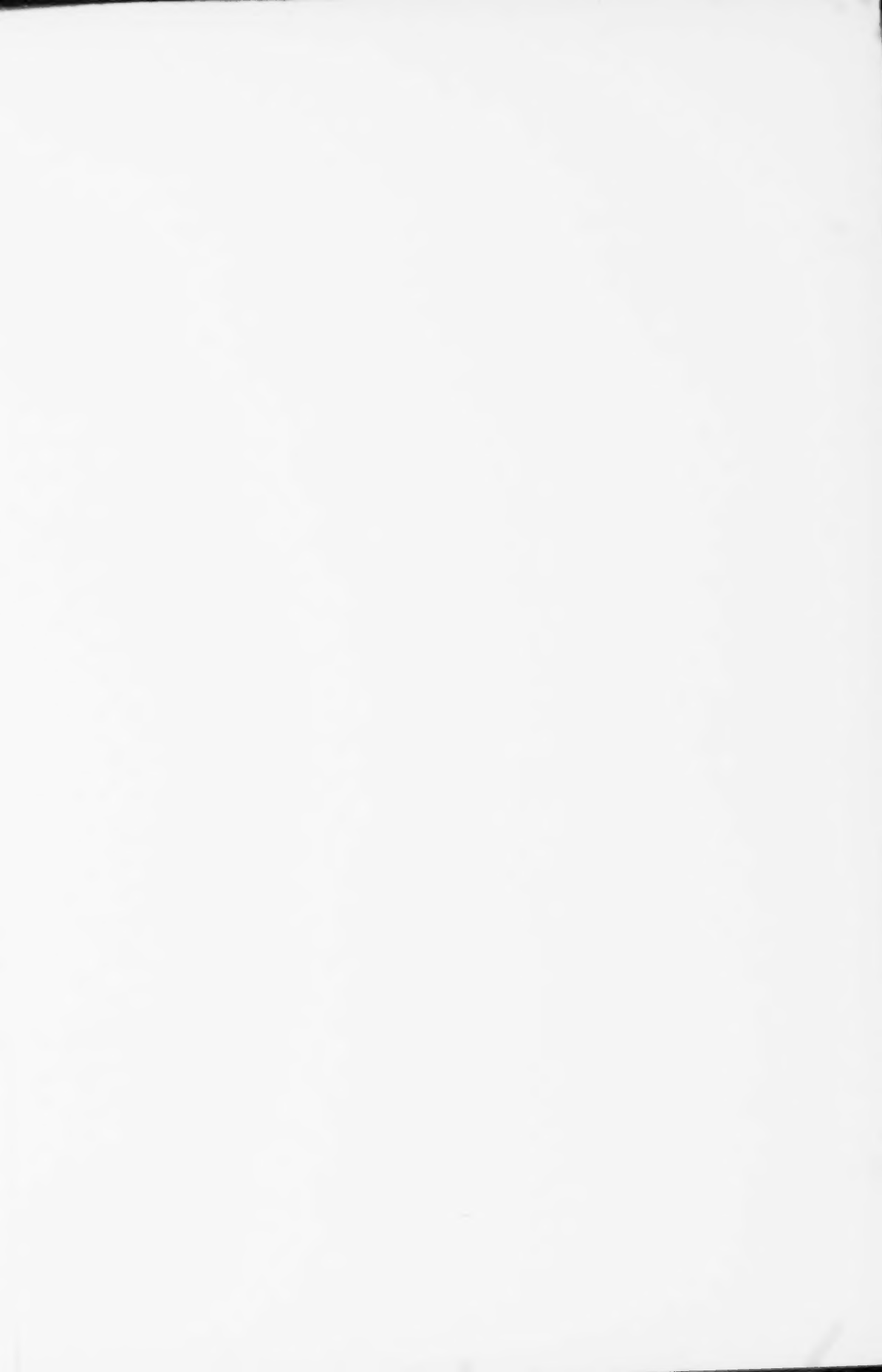
Respectfully submitted,

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Oct 30 1991

3

No. 91-342

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner,

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO,
Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to
the Colorado Court of Appeals

**MOTION AND BRIEF OF *AMICUS CURIAE* PUBLIC
CITIZEN IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER**

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October 30, 1991



IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

No. 91-342

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner,

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO,
Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to
the Colorado Court of Appeals

**MOTION OF PUBLIC CITIZEN FOR
LEAVE TO FILE BRIEF *AMICUS
CURIAE* IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER**

Movant Public Citizen hereby seeks leave to file a brief *amicus curiae* in support of petitioner. The Petition seeks review of a decision of the Colorado Court of Appeals that affirmed an injunction barring petitioner from filing *any* "paperwork of any nature" on a *pro se* basis in the Twentieth Judicial District of Colorado.*

Public Citizen is a nationwide consumer advocacy organization with over 100,000 members. Of particular interest to our

* A copy of petitioner's written consent has been lodged with the Clerk. The attorney for the respondent, Beverly Fulton, has informed the undersigned counsel of record that she does not consent to the filing of a brief *amicus curiae*.

membership have been the issues of open government and access to the courts, both of which concern the ability of the citizenry to participate in the political process and to petition the Government for redress of their grievances. Thus, we have supported the right of individuals to represent themselves in court and before administrative agencies and to be assisted by paralegals and other lay advocates in certain circumstances. Further, Public Citizen's Litigation Group is a co-author of *Representing Yourself -- What You Can Do Without A Lawyer* (Farrar-Straus-Giroux, 4th Printing 1987), which offers advice on how to represent oneself in a variety of personal and business matters, from buying and selling a home, to incorporating a small business, to in-court representation in certain circumstances.

We are therefore extremely concerned about the virtually unlimited scope of the injunction issued by the District Court of Boulder County, Colorado (Pet. A1-A3), and affirmed by the Colorado Court of Appeals (Pet. A3-A17), which forever bars petitioner from participating *pro se* in any state court litigation in the county in which he resides, not only involving respondent University of Colorado, but any other person whatsoever. Although the injunction expressly excludes post-judgment collection proceedings or appeals (presumably of the injunction itself), its breadth is extraordinary. For example, petitioner may not, on a *pro se* basis, initiate, or even defend, any court action in the Twentieth Judicial District of Colorado, nor may he even seek leave to file an action or pleading in any proceeding. We believe that this Court will benefit from an *amicus* brief at the *certiorari* stage because the petitioner is proceeding *pro se* before this Court and is not himself an attorney. We also believe that our perspective will sharpen the issues set out in the Petition and provide a more focussed perspective on the difficult problems inherent in the overbroad and fundamentally unfair injunction issued by the District Court of Boulder County. We ask therefore that Public Citizen be granted leave to file the accompanying brief *amicus curiae* in support of petitioner.

Respectfully submitted,

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October 30, 1991



QUESTION PRESENTED

Amicus Public Citizen believes that certiorari should be granted on the following question, which is adequately encompassed by the Petition's first, second, fifth, and twelfth question presented:

May a state court enjoin a *pro se* litigant from any participation in further litigation in any court in that judicial district, unless he hires an attorney to represent him, even as a defendant and even in the small claims court (where litigants must proceed *pro se*), on the ground that his prior litigation was frivolous and vexatious?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES	iii
INTEREST OF <i>AMICUS</i>	1
STATEMENT OF THE CASE	1
REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT	4
A. THE DECISION BELOW IGNORES APPLICABLE LEGAL PRINCIPLES.	5
B. THE APPROACHES OF THE COLORADO COURT OF APPEALS AND THOSE OF MOST OTHER COURTS DIFFER WIDELY, REQUIRING THE GUIDANCE OF THIS COURT.	10
CONCLUSION	13

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases:	Page:
<i>Andrews v. Bechtel Power Corp.</i> , 780 F.2d 124 (1st Cir. 1985), cert. denied, 476 U.S. 1172 (1986)	5, 7
<i>Board of County Comm'rs v. Winslow</i> , 706 P.2d 792 (Colo. 1985), cert. denied, 475 U.S. 1018 (1986)	3, 4, 9
<i>Boddie v. Connecticut</i> , 401 U.S. 371 (1971)	5
<i>Bounds v. Smith</i> , 430 U.S. 817 (1977)	4, 5
<i>California Motor Transport Co. v. Trucking Unlimited</i> , 404 U.S. 508 (1972)	4
<i>Chambers v. Baltimore & Ohio RR</i> , 207 U.S. 142 (1907)	5
<i>Civil Rights Commission v. University of Colorado</i> , 759 P.2d 726 (Colo. 1988)	13
<i>In re Demos</i> , 111 S. Ct. 1569 (1991)	9
<i>Douglas v. California</i> , 372 U.S. 353 (1963)	5
<i>Eitel v. Holland</i> , 787 F.2d 995 (5th Cir. 1986)	5
<i>Faretta v. California</i> , 422 U.S. 806 (1975)	5, 6, 9
<i>United Transport Union v. Michigan</i> , 401 U.S. 576 (1971)	7
<i>Goldberg v. Kelly</i> , 397 U.S. 254 (1970)	9
<i>In re Green</i> , 669 F.2d 779 (D.C. Cir. 1981)	7, 11

<i>Green v. Warden, U.S. Penitentiary</i> , 699 F.2d 364 (7th Cir.), cert. denied, 461 U.S. 960 (1983)	7
<i>Johnson v. Avery</i> , 393 U.S. 483 (1969)	5
<i>Kondrat v. Byron</i> , 587 F. Supp. 994 (N.D. Ohio 1984), aff'd without published opinion, 762 F.2d 1008 (6th Cir. 1985)	11
<i>In re Martin-Trigona</i> , 737 F.2d 1254 (2d Cir. 1984)	7, 10, 11
<i>Mayfield v. Collins</i> , 918 F.2d 560 (5th Cir. 1991)	7
<i>Mayfield v. Klevenhagen</i> , 941 F.2d 346 (5th Cir. 1991)	7
<i>In re McDonald</i> , 489 U.S. 180 (1989)	5, 9, 10, 12, 13
<i>NAACP v. Button</i> , 371 U.S. 415 (1963)	7
<i>O'Reilly v. New York Times</i> , 692 F.2d 863 (2d Cir. 1982)	5, 6
<i>Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Co. v. Haslip</i> , 111 S. Ct. 1032 (1991)	6
<i>People v. Carter</i> , 678 F. Supp. 1484 (D. Colo. 1986)	7, 8
<i>People v. Dunlap</i> , 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981)	3
<i>People v. Spencer</i> , 524 P.2d 1084 (Colo. 1974)	3
<i>Peralta v. Heights Medical Center</i> , 485 U.S. 80 (1988)	9
<i>Price v. Johnston</i> , 334 U.S. 266 (1948)	5
<i>Rudrer v. United States</i> , 462 F.2d 897 (8th Cir. 1972)	10, 11
<i>In re Sindram</i> , 111 S. Ct. 596 (1991)	9, 12

<i>Snyder v. Massachusetts</i> , 291 U.S. 97 (1934)	6
<i>The Slaughter-House Cases</i> , 83 U.S. (16 Wall.) 36 (1873)	5
<i>Tripathi v. Beaman</i> , 878 F.2d 351 (10th Cir. 1989)	8
<i>Uberoi v. Ellefson, Kirby and State Farm Ins. Co.</i> , No. 85CV1686-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.)	2, 12
<i>Uberoi v. Kirby and State Farm Ins. Co.</i> , No. 83-S-876-8 (Boulder Cty. Ct., Colo.)	2
<i>Uberoi v. Malakh, et al.</i> , No. 84CV1907-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.)	2, 12
<i>Uberoi v. Richtel</i> , No. 87-Z-961 (U.S. Dist. Ct., D. Colo.)	2
<i>Uberoi v. University of Colorado</i> , 686 P.2d 785 (Colo. 1984)	2, 8, 12
<i>Uberoi v. University of Colorado</i> , 713 P.2d 894 (Colo. 1986)	12
<i>Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al.</i> , No. 82-LW- 806 (U.S. Dist Ct., D. Colo.)	2
<i>United States v. Kras</i> , 409 U.S. 434 (1973)	5
<i>University of Colorado v. Uberoi</i> , No. 88-F-1323 (D. Colo., Sept. 25, 1989), <i>aff'd</i> , Nos. 89-1117, 89-1304, 89-1337 (10th Cir. May 25, 1990)	8
<i>Urban v. United Nations</i> , 768 F.2d 1497 (D.C. Cir. 1985)	12
Statutes, Laws, and Constitutional Provisions	
28 U.S.C. § 1654	5

Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-72-202(1.5)	13
Colo. Const., Art. II, § 6	5
Colo. Const., Art. II, § 16	5
Colo. Rev. Stat. § 13-6-401	10
Colo. Rev. Stat. § 13-6-407(2)	10
1985 Colo. Sess. Laws, H.B. 1226	13

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

No. 91-342

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner,

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF COLORADO,
Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to
the Colorado Court of Appeals

BRIEF OF *AMICUS CURIAE* PUBLIC CITIZEN
IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER

INTEREST OF AMICUS

The interest of *amicus* Public Citizen is set out in the accompanying motion for leave to file this brief.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On August 17, 1988, respondent University of Colorado filed a complaint in the District Court of Boulder County, Colorado, requesting that petitioner be preliminarily and permanently enjoined from further representing himself as a plaintiff in any proceeding in the Twentieth Judicial District of Colorado (which includes the City of Boulder). A hearing was held before the district court on December 16, 1988, at which respondent relied

entirely on pleadings and orders in eight lawsuits prosecuted over a six-year period by petitioner, six in the Colorado state court system and two in the federal courts.

Only four of petitioner's lawsuits were brought against respondent. One of his suits attempted to subject respondent to the Colorado Open Records Act, *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 686 P.2d 785 (Colo. 1984), and another sought to hold the University liable for violations of the False Claims Act involving allegedly unlawful charges for indirect costs in contracts with the United States Government. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, No. 82-LW-806 (U.S. Dist. Ct., D. Colo.). Petitioner also sued respondent and its employees for violations of his civil rights concerning an alleged assault that occurred when petitioner attempted to obtain records from respondent's files that he claimed were being unlawfully withheld. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, No. 83CV625-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.). Almost all of the claims against respondent ultimately were resolved favorably to the University, and in some, but not all, cases petitioner was ordered to pay respondent's attorney's fees and costs on the ground that petitioner's claims were frivolous or that his litigation conduct was vexatious.¹

Three suits have concerned property disputes, two involving an automobile accident, *Uberoi v. Kirby and State Farm Ins. Co.*, No. 83-S-876-8 (Boulder Cty. Ct., Colo.) and *Uberoi v. Ellefson, Kirby and State Farm Ins. Co.*, No. 85CV1686-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.), and the other involving an encroachment upon petitioner's property in which a neighbor and the City of Boulder were defendants. *Uberoi v. Malakh, et al.*, No. 84CV1907-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.). The former resulted in a jury verdict in petitioner's favor, which, however, was more than offset by attorney's fees awarded to certain defendants. The latter case settled for

¹ Petitioner also filed another case principally under the Open Records Act, in which he obtained some documents and was denied others. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, No. 85CV2080-2 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.). In *Uberoi v. Richtel*, No. 87-Z-961 (U.S. Dist. Ct., D. Colo.), petitioner sued a state court judge for his conduct in that Open Records Act case. *Richtel* was eventually dismissed as moot, with each party bearing his own costs.

\$500 from each defendant, without an award of attorney's fees or sanctions against any party.

At the conclusion of the hearing in this case, the district court ruled from the bench that respondent was entitled to an injunction prohibiting petitioner from appearing or filing *any* papers in the Twentieth Judicial District without being represented by an attorney. Transcript of December 16, 1988 Hearing ("Tr.") at 79-80. That ruling was later reduced to a written order "prohibiting [petitioner] from filing paperwork of any nature in any current or future pending case in the Twentieth Judicial District except matters relating to appeal or post-judgment proceedings unless he has an attorney who enters his or her appearance in any such case" (Pet. A1-A2). The court further stated that "[t]he stay is effective January 16, 1989" (Pet. A2). On January 23, 1989, the court issued an amended injunction, which reads in its entirety:

It having come to the Court's attention by its re-reading the written injunction dated December 27, 1988, that some ambiguity may be present in said order, the Court now amends it to make clear that [petitioner] Mahinder Uberoi is enjoined from representing himself in any manner in the Twentieth Judicial District beginning January 16, 1989, except in post-judgment collection proceedings or appeals (Pet. A2-A3).

The Colorado Court of Appeals affirmed (Pet. A3-A17). The court first considered petitioner's claim that the injunction violated his constitutional right of access to the courts. Relying primarily on the Colorado Supreme Court's decision in *Bd. of County Comm'rs v. Winslow*, 706 P.2d 792 (Colo. 1985), *cert. denied*, 475 U.S. 1018 (1986); *see also, e.g., People v. Dunlap*, 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981); *People v. Spencer*, 524 P.2d 1084 (Colo. 1974), the court of appeals rejected this argument in one paragraph, holding that petitioner's right of access to the court is not infringed "'because he still may ... employ[] an attorney authorized to practice in the State of Colorado'" (Pet. A7, *quoting*

Winslow, 706 P.2d at 794-95).²

The court of appeals further held that the lower court had not abused its discretion in issuing its injunction (Pet. A8). The court reviewed prior decisions of the Colorado Supreme Court that sought to balance a litigant's right of access to the courts against the public's interest against repetitious, baseless litigation (Pet. A9). The court of appeals then briefly reviewed the trial court record and held that, because the "findings have support in the record, they will not be disturbed on review" (Pet. A12). Petitioner's petition for rehearing to the court of appeals and petition for writ of certiorari to the Colorado Supreme Court were summarily denied (Pet. A18, A19).³

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

The decision of the Colorado Court of Appeals does not address the important federal constitutional issues raised in the Petition. Although this Court has repeatedly made clear that the constitutional right of access to the courts is of fundamental importance, *see, e.g., Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817 (1977), it has never directly addressed the right to self-representation of a civil litigant in the state courts. Moreover, the lower courts are without firm guidance as to the restrictions that may be imposed on the constitutional right of access to the courts to prevent litigation abuse by a *pro se* litigant. As we now show, this case provides a particularly good vehicle for providing such guidance because the decision below departs from the mainstream approaches to litigation abuse followed by the lower federal courts.

²The court of appeals did not mention that part of the lower court's injunction that bars petitioner from appearing *pro se* as a defendant, even though that aspect of the order was expressly raised by petitioner. *See, e.g.,* Opening Brief of Defendant-Appellant, at 2, *Bd. of Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uheroi*, Court of Appeals, State of Colorado, No. 89 CA 0124.

³The court of appeals also rejected petitioner's claim that his right to due process was violated because he did not have sufficient notice of the injunction hearing (Pet. A13-A15), and it also rejected other state law defenses (Pet. A16-A17). We do not support review on any of these grounds.

A. THE DECISION BELOW IGNORES APPLICABLE LEGAL PRINCIPLES.

The right of access to the courts has been described variously as emanating from the First Amendment's right to petition the government for redress of grievances, *see, e.g., California Motor Transport Co. v. Trucking Unlimited*, 404 U.S. 508, 513 (1972), as a privilege of national citizenship under the Fourteenth Amendment's Privileges and Immunities Clause, *see, e.g., The Slaughter-House Cases*, 83 U.S. (16 Wall.) 36, 79 (1873), and as inherent in our constitutional scheme because it "is the right conservative of all other rights." *Chambers v. Baltimore & Ohio RR*, 207 U.S. 142, 148 (1907); *accord Bounds*, 430 U.S. at 827 (citing *Johnson v. Avery*, 393 U.S. 483, 485 (1969)); *see also United States v. Kras*, 409 U.S. 434, 462 (1973) (Marshall, J., dissenting). This Court has held that barriers to court access may also be analyzed under the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause. *See Boddie v. Connecticut*, 401 U.S. 371 (1971); *Douglas v. California*, 372 U.S. 353, 356 (1963); *id.* at 363 (Harlan, J., dissenting).

Many of the modern cases enunciating the right of access to the courts in civil proceedings have involved *pro se* litigants. *See, e.g., Bounds, supra*. This Court itself has stressed that self-representation is a valued and fundamental right. *See, e.g., In re McDonald*, 489 U.S. 180, 184 (1989) (per curiam); *Price v. Johnston*, 334 U.S. 266, 280 (1948) (assuming that litigant seeking writ of habeas corpus may reject appointed counsel and represent himself). However, because the right to self-representation in all federal court proceedings has been guaranteed by statute since 1789, 28 U.S.C. § 1654, and is often secured in the states by constitution or statute, *see, e.g., Colo. Const., Art. II, §§ 6, 16; cf. Faretta v. California*, 422 U.S. 806, 813 n. 10 (1975), the question whether there exists a federal constitutional right to *pro se* representation in civil proceedings has received little attention.⁴

⁴ Only one federal court has squarely addressed the issue, holding that there is no such right, but doing so without any analysis. *See Eitel v. Holland*, 787 F.2d 995, 998 (5th Cir. 1986). *See also Andrews v. Bechtel Power Corp.*, 780 F.2d 124, 137 (1st Cir. 1985) (dicta), *cert. denied*, 476 U.S. 1172 (1986). *Cf. O'Reilly v. New York Times*, 692 F.2d 863, 867 (2d Cir. 1982).

In our view, the right to self-representation in civil cases is guaranteed by the constitution. In *Faretta*, *supra*, this Court held that a criminal defendant has a right to self-representation guaranteed by the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments. *Faretta*'s rationale was not that usually associated with other rights emanating from the Sixth Amendment, *i.e.*, the need for heightened procedural safeguards attending criminal, as opposed to civil, proceedings, because of the potential for loss of liberty. Indeed, *Faretta* noted that a defendant's rights to a fair criminal trial would often be better protected with the assistance of counsel. 422 U.S. at 832-33.

Rather, *Faretta* was premised on a fundamental conviction, having its roots in England, and carried over to the colonies, that lawyers were to be distrusted and that ordinary citizens had the ability and common sense to look after their own interests. *Id.* at 826. In short, "[t]he Founders believed that self-representation was a basic right of a free people." *Id.* at 830 n.39; *see also O'Reilly v. New York Times Co.*, 692 F.2d 863, 867 n.5 (2d Cir. 1982) (Friendly, J.). Thus, the rationale of *Faretta* -- that the right of self-representation is longstanding, fundamental and inherent in the American ideal of self-determination -- is not limited to criminal proceedings, and strongly suggests that the Due Process Clause protects one's right to appear *pro se* in civil cases. *See Pac. Mut. Life Ins. Co. v. Haslip*, 111 S. Ct. 1032, 1051 (1991) (Scalia, J., concurring); *Snyder v. Massachusetts*, 291 U.S. 97, 105 (1934) (due process protects practices "so rooted in the traditions and conscience of our people as to be ranked as fundamental"). *Cf. Faretta*, 422 U.S. at 819 n. 15.

The existence of a constitutional right to self-representation in civil cases is relevant here because it severely undermines the rationale of the Colorado court's injunction. At the injunction hearing, the court stated that an absolute ban on self-representation was reasonable because petitioner was not indigent and, therefore, could hire an attorney to represent him on meritorious claims (Tr. at 78). In our view, however, because the right to proceed *pro se* in civil cases is guaranteed by Fourteenth Amendment, a curtailment of that right cannot be justified by saying that petitioner is free to hire an attorney. *Cf. Faretta*, 422 U.S. at 833

("it is one thing to hold that every defendant, rich or poor, has the right to the assistance of counsel, and quite another to say that a State may compel a defendant to accept a lawyer he does not want"). As one court has put it, "[a] necessary part of the right of self-representation is that a litigant, especially a plaintiff in a civil case, cannot be coerced into accepting appointed counsel rather than proceeding *pro se*." *Andrews v. Bechtel Power Corp.*, 780 F.2d 124, 137 (1st Cir. 1985).

This is not to say that, absent a due process right to self-representation, a prohibition against proceeding *pro se* in any way in a civil action would be constitutional. Apart from the Due Process Clause, the constitutional right of access to the courts under the First Amendment is sufficiently fundamental that the Colorado courts should have narrowed their injunction in a way that accorded that right greater respect. The injunction is, in effect, a broad prior restraint on petitioner's exercise of his First Amendment right to petition the government for redress of grievances, which runs against the grain of constitutional precedent. Cf. generally *United Transp. Union v. Michigan*, 401 U.S. 576 (1971); *NAACP v. Button*, 371 U.S. 415 (1963). Even those cases that limit the court access of *pro se* litigants have not forced litigants to retain a lawyer, but have required them to gain leave of court before filing a lawsuit. See, e.g., *Mayfield v. Collins*, 918 F.2d 560, 562 (5th Cir. 1991); *In re Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d 1254, 1258-59, 1264 (2d Cir. 1984); *Green v. Warden, U.S. Penitentiary*, 699 F.2d 364 (7th Cir.), cert. denied, 461 U.S. 960 (1983); *In re Green*, 669 F.2d 779, 787 (D.C. Cir. 1981). Unlike the decisions below, these rulings balance a litigant's right to self-representation against the integrity of the judicial system in a way that safeguards the legitimate interests of the individual and still protects the courts and other litigants from frivolous, time consuming claims.⁵

⁵ As we have noted (*supra* at 3), there is a line of Colorado authority barring plaintiffs from court unless they have an attorney. Only one reported federal case of which we are aware has required a *pro se* litigant to hire counsel. That case, involving an indigent *pro se* litigant, arose before Chief Judge Finesilver of the United States District Court for the District of Colorado. *People v. Carter*, 678 F. Supp. 1484, 1491-92 (D. Colo. 1986). Cf. *Mayfield v. Klevenhagen*, 941 F.2d 346 (5th

The court of appeals also erred by assuming that petitioner would be able to hire counsel to represent him in non-frivolous claims. The courts below did not even consider whether it was realistic to assume that the market for attorneys in Boulder County was such that petitioner could retain a lawyer at affordable rates, particularly in the type of cases that petitioner has brought which challenge entrenched authorities on sensitive issues, with little likelihood of attorney's fees or significant monetary recovery from which a contingent fee might be paid. *E.g., Ubero v. University of Colorado*, 686 P.2d 785. Moreover, since the injunction runs in perpetuity, the presumption that petitioner will be able to hire a lawyer forever, in all kinds of cases, would appear to be unfounded. This is critically important because, if petitioner could not retain counsel, he would be wholly without access to the courts, since the order here prevents him from filing *any* paper *pro se*, even one asking leave to amend or reconsider that order, generally or for only one case. Since preconditions on even the most vexatious litigant cannot be so burdensome as to deny meaningful access to the courts, *see, e.g., Tripathi v. Beaman*, 878 F.2d 351, 352 (10th Cir. 1989), the court of appeals erred in affirming an injunction that made no findings as to whether petitioner could in fact hire an attorney under all of the circumstances covered by the order.

Two other aspects of the lower court's injunction put it even further outside the realm of constitutionally-permissible restrictions on *pro se* litigation. All of the cases in this area of which we are aware -- even the few that do require the retention of an attorney -- place restrictions only on *plaintiffs* or other *proponents*

Cir. 1991)(imposing monetary sanction after *pro se* litigant violated a "leave of court" injunction). Thereafter, respondent University of Colorado sought and obtained an injunction against petitioner before Judge Finesilver, greatly restricting his right to appear in federal district court without counsel. *University of Colorado v. Ubero*, No. 88-F-1323 (D. Colo., Sept. 25, 1989), *aff'd*, Nos. 89-1117, 89-1304, 89-1337 (10th Cir. May 25, 1990)(unpublished opinion). That injunction against petitioner -- which we also believe sweeps far too broadly -- is, however, less restrictive than the injunction before this Court in one significant respect: it allows petitioner to appear *pro se* in a defensive posture. *Id.* slip op. at 14, *accord Carter*, 678 F. Supp. at 1492.

of civil claims. *E.g., Bd. of County Comm'rs v. Winslow*, 706 P.2d at 794; *see supra* note 5. In this case, however, petitioner "is enjoined from representing himself *in any manner* in the Twentieth Judicial District ..." (Pet. A3)(emphasis added).

Thus, if petitioner is charged with a crime in the Twentieth Judicial District, he will have to hire a lawyer, a result directly forbidden by this Court's decision in *Faretta*. Similarly, if petitioner is sued for divorce or by someone seeking a judgment resulting from an automobile accident, he has no choice but to accept a default judgment or hire an attorney. The lower court's injunction goes beyond requiring an attorney to help petitioner make a preliminary assessment of his case and appear with him in court because, by the plain terms of the injunction, petitioner's attorney must represent him throughout the entire course of the suit, no matter how costly that may be.⁶

Besides directly violating *Faretta* in the criminal context, the injunction here simply cannot be squared with the Fourteenth Amendment's requirement that no person be deprived of property without due process. Due process demands that, before a person is deprived of a property interest -- here, the cost of hiring an attorney, and the significant consequences if petitioner does not do so -- he be afforded some type of individualized assessment of the validity of his claim at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner, *Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970), something which the injunction clearly does not do. And, since due process requires a case-specific inquiry even where it might appear that a defendant's case is without merit, *see Peralta v. Heights Medical Center*, 485 U.S. 80 (1988), it surely does not allow the Colorado courts to prejudge the validity of petitioner's defenses, for all cases, in perpetuity, at such a substantial risk to his property. We do not suggest that a *pro se* defendant may never be required to obtain counsel, *but cf. Faretta*; however, we do believe that due

⁶ Thus, the court of appeals' decision potentially imposes a cost far greater than the cost of filing fees that this Court imposed on a *pro se* litigant who had filed dozens of frivolous actions, including 22 petitions for extraordinary writs. *See In re McDonald*, 489 U.S. 180 (1989)(per curiam); *see also In re Demos*, 111 S. Ct. 1569 (1991)(per curiam); *In re Sindram*, 111 S. Ct. 596 (1991)(per curiam).

process at least requires that petitioner be allowed to appear *pro se* and defend any action unless and until it appears that he has abused the court system in that action.

Finally, the injunction absolutely bars petitioner from appearing in the Small Claims Division of the County Court of the Twentieth Judicial District where, except in very limited circumstances not applicable here, “an individual *shall* represent himself.” Colo. Rev. Stat. § 13-6-407(2)(emphasis added); *see also id.* § 13-6-401. Thus, if petitioner wishes to prosecute, *or even to defend*, a claim in the Small Claims Division of the Boulder County court, he may not do so. This is more than a little ironic in light of respondent’s implicit contention that part of petitioner’s difficulty in self-representation stems from the fact that he is not a lawyer and does not understand the rules of evidence, jurisdiction, and procedure. Nevertheless, at respondent’s insistence, petitioner is absolutely barred from appearing in a court where “the rules of procedure and pleading and the technical rules of evidence do not apply” *Id.*

B. THE APPROACHES OF THE COLORADO COURT OF APPEALS AND THOSE OF MOST OTHER COURTS DIFFER WIDELY, REQUIRING THE GUIDANCE OF THIS COURT.

1. As indicated above (*supra* at 7), the federal courts of appeals have generally required only that abusive *pro se* litigants obtain leave of court before filing lawsuits, but have not totally barred such litigants from appearing *pro se*. In some instances, to deter the practice of filing multiple actions concerning previously adjudicated claims, the courts also have required a *pro se* plaintiff to submit a list of previously litigated actions when seeking leave for further litigation. *See, e.g., Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d at 1258 n.3. *Cf. Ruderer v. United States*, 462 F.2d 897, 899 (8th Cir. 1972)(barring litigation on issue previously adjudicated many times). Similarly, this Court, while having required some *pro se* petitioners to pay filing fees on their requests for extraordinary writs, *see, e.g., In re McDonald*, 489 U.S. at 184, has not, to our knowledge, required them to hire counsel against their will.

Because the trial court here justified its requirement that petitioner hire an attorney on the ground that he is not indigent (Tr. at 78), it is worth noting that other courts faced with the question of litigation abuse generally have not focused on the financial resources of the *pro se* litigant in fashioning their injunctions. Most courts have assumed that the right of a litigant to proceed *pro se* is fundamental, and thus that any prior restraint on the exercise of that right may not force an attorney on an unwilling "client." Indeed, in some instances where a *pro se* litigant was required to seek leave of court (but not to retain counsel), it appears that the litigant was neither indigent nor a prisoner. See, e.g., *Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d at 1256-57.

By contrast, the District Court of Boulder County has issued an injunction that requires petitioner to hire a lawyer or forfeit his right of access to the courts, without even considering the less restrictive methods used by the lower federal courts. Moreover, *no* reported appellate decision of which we are aware prospectively bars even the most abusive litigant from *defending* a claim on a *pro se* basis, as does the injunction here. Thus, this Court should grant review to resolve the conflict evidenced by the approach of the Colorado Court Appeals and other courts (*see supra* note 5) and to establish the parameters for imposing limitations on *pro se* litigation abuse.

2. Any decision to sanction a perceived abuse of the court system by a *pro se* litigant should, of course, consider the magnitude of the burden caused by that litigant. Many of the leading cases involve truly extraordinary numbers of separate actions. See, e.g., *Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d at 1259 (about 250 cases in state and federal courts, plus numerous other suits served but not filed); *Green*, 669 F.2d at 781 (between 600 and 700 federal suits). Cf. *Ruderer*, 462 F.2d at 898 (21 suits regarding the same event). By comparison, the court of appeals affirmed the injunction here on the basis of only *eight* lawsuits. Compare *Kondrat v. Byron*, 587 F. Supp. 994, 998 (N.D. Ohio 1984) (denying injunction where *pro se* litigant had filed only four lawsuits concerning same occurrences), *aff'd without published opinion*, 762 F.2d 1008 (6th Cir. 1985). While we hesitate to recommend a numerical touchstone for the restriction of a valued constitutional right, the disparity of

the approach of the Colorado courts with that of most other courts warrants this Court's attention.

Similarly important is the degree of merit of a *pro se* litigant's claims. Many of the notable cases in this area concern litigants who file nothing but undeniably frivolous claims. See, e.g., *Urban v. United Nations*, 768 F.2d 1497, 1498-99 (D.C. Cir. 1985) (*pro se* litigant who, among other things, brought suit against "world Government of World Citizens" and sought to enjoin Presidential inauguration). Cf. *In re McDonald*, 489 U.S. at 184 (noting frivolity of petitioner's claims for extraordinary writs and that such relief is almost never granted); *In re Sindram*, 111 S.Ct. 596, 597 (1991) (per curiam).

This case presents a very different situation. Some of petitioner's litigation was clearly non-frivolous. See *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 686 P.2d 785 (rejecting claim that University was subject to Colorado Open Records Act, over two dissents) (no accusation of abusive litigation conduct); *Uberoi v. Malakh, et al.*, No. 84CV1907-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo.) (property encroachment claims settled for \$1000; some motions denied, but no conduct sanctioned). Cf. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 713 P.2d 894, 899-904 (Colo. 1986) (petitioner withstood University's Eleventh Amendment defense, claims of official immunity, and other defenses). In other cases, petitioner has presented at least partially meritorious claims, although the litigation was conducted in an unduly burdensome and sanctionable manner. See *Uberoi v. Ellefson, Kirby and State Farm Ins. Co.*, No. 85CV1686-5 (Boulder Dist. Ct., Colo. 1985) (\$700 jury verdict in favor of petitioner on one count; all other counts dismissed; petitioner ordered to pay \$3098 in opponent's attorney's fees for vexatious conduct).

The requirement that petitioner obtain counsel seems particularly inappropriate where his conduct, while not laudable, has been accompanied by at least a good dose of serious, non-frivolous claims, at least one of which raised an important issue of public policy. See *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 686 P.2d 785 (Open Records Act case). Indeed, the Colorado Legislature responded almost immediately to this decision and amended the

Colorado Open Records Act to make clear that respondent was subject to it. 1985 Colo. Sess. Laws, H.B. 1226, § 1 (*codified at* Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-72-202(1.5)); *see Civil Rights Comm'n v. University of Colorado*, 759 P.2d 726, 734 (Colo. 1988) (recognizing that *Uberoi* did not comport with legislative intent). Thus, to totally bar petitioner from appearing *pro se*, where pre-filing screening and case-specific sanctions would suffice, raises a serious constitutional problem. In any event, because such less restrictive alternatives have generally been employed by the lower federal courts, in situations where *pro se* litigants have filed nothing but frivolous claims, the vast difference in approach here suggests a need for review by this Court.

3. Public Citizen believes that this case is not about a *pro se* litigant determined to wreak havoc on the court system, although we do not doubt that petitioner has at times litigated without restraint and without regard for proper procedures, the interests of respondent and other litigants, and the needs of the court system. Rather, the Petition challenges the sweeping injunction of the Boulder County District Court which, in its zeal to rid itself of a contentious *pro se* litigant, has imposed a dangerous and unnecessary prior restraint on petitioner's constitutional right of access to the courts. That such an injunction has been affirmed by a state court of appeals, without any serious consideration of its constitutional ramifications, is all the more troubling. As this Court has noted, *pro se* litigants have brought momentous issues to the Court's attention, and continue to do so. *In re McDonald*, 489 U.S. at 184 (*citing Gideon v. Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963)). In other contexts as well, *pro se* litigants continue both to raise serious questions and set important precedents. *See, e.g., Merrell v. Block*, 809 F.2d 639, 640 (9th Cir. 1987); *Naekel v. Dept. of Transportation*, 782 F.2d 975 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In doing so, they follow in the tradition of the Founders, who saw self-representation as a fundamental right of a free people, as a positive good and not merely a necessity for the indigent.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, certiorari should be granted to review the overbroad injunction affirmed by the Colorado Court

of Appeals and to provide guidance on the important questions raised in the Petition.

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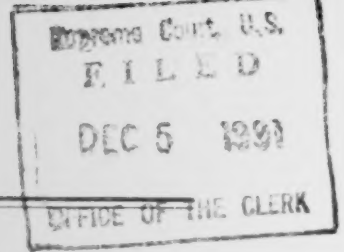
October 30, 1991

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(4)

No. 91-342

**IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE
UNITED STATES**

October Term, 1991

MAHINDER S. UBEROI

PETITIONER

VS.

THE BOARD OF REGENTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO RESPONDENT

**ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI
TO THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE
STATE OF COLORADO**

BRIEF FOR RESPONDENT IN OPPOSITION

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QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether enjoining of a *pro se* litigant from further *pro se* action as plaintiff or proponent of a claim is an appropriate and constitutional remedy, where plaintiff has repeatedly brought frivolous and groundless litigation, refused to obey orders of the court, misrepresented facts, sued judges and lawyers involved in his cases, demonstrated a likelihood of continued abuse, and has through his conduct rendered useless less severe remedies?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Opinion Below	p. 1
Jurisdiction	p. 1
Statement of the Case	p. 1
Summary of the Argument	p. 5
Argument	p. 5
Conclusion	p. 14
Appendix 1	p. A1
Appendix 2	p. B1
Appendix 3	p. C1

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

CASES	Page
Board of County Commissioners v. Barday, 594 P.2d 1057 (Colo. 1979)	10
Board of County Commissioners v. Howard, 640 P.2d 1128 (Colo. 1982).....	10
Board of County Commissioners v. Winslow 706 P.2d 792 (Colo. 1985)	10
Board of Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uberoi, 89-1117, 89-1304, 89-1337 (10th Cir., May 25, 1990) (unpublished opinion) (Resp. App. C)	1
Bounds v. Smith, 430 U.S. 817, 97 S. Ct. 1491, 52 L.Ed. 2d 72 (1977)	11
Gelabert v. Lynaugh, 894 F.2d 746 (5th Cir. 1990).....	10
Hardwick v. Brinson, 523 F.2d 798 (5th Cir. 1975).....	8
In Re McDonald, 489 US 180, 109 S. Ct. 993, 103 L. Ed. 2d 158 (1989)	8, 9, 10
In Re Tyler, 839 F.2d 1290 (8th Cir. 1988).....	10
Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 109 S.Ct. 1827, 104 L.Ed.2d 338 (1989)	11
People of the State of Colorado v. Carter, 678 F.Supp. 1484, (D. Colo. 1986)	8
People v. Dunlap, 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981)	10
People v. Spencer, 524 P.2d 1084 (Colo. 1974).....	10
Procup v. Strickland, 792 F.2d 1069 (11th Cir. 1986)	8

	Page
Shotkin v. Kaplan, 116 Colo. 295, 180 P.2d 1021 (1947)	10
State of Colorado v. Fleming, 726 F.Supp. 1216, (D.Colo. 1989)	8
Tripati v. Beaman, 878 F. 2d 351, (10th Cir. 1989)	8
 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS, STATUTES AND RULES:	
Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 59	6

OPINION BELOW

The opinion of the Court of Appeals of the State of Colorado is unpublished. The opinion is filed as case number 89 CA 0124, and is reprinted in the petition for writ of certiorari filed with this Court (Pet. App., pp. A.3-A.17).

JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Court of Appeals was entered on October 18, 1990. Rehearing was denied on November 23, 1990. On April 15, 1991, the Supreme Court of the State of Colorado denied a petition for writ of certiorari. The petition for a writ of certiorari was filed in this Court on August 21, 1991. The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under 28 U.S.C. § 1257(a).

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

The University of Colorado, a public institution of higher education, and its officers and employees have been continuously defending various actions brought by Petitioner Uberoi since 1983. State and federal courts have found that, for the most part, these actions are frivolous, groundless, and vexatious.

In August of 1988, the University filed complaints for injunctive relief in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado, and in the state district court for the County of Boulder. The University sought to enjoin the Petitioner from bringing further *pro se* lawsuits as the plaintiff or proponent of a claim. After two evidentiary hearings, one prior to issuance of a preliminary injunction and one prior to issuance of a permanent injunction, the United States District Court so enjoined Petitioner Uberoi. Please see *Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uberoi*, No. 88FE1323 (D. Colo., Sept. 27, 1989) (unpublished decision). The District Court order was upheld by the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit in consolidated actions number 89-1117, *Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uberoi*. For the convenience of the Court, the

District Court and the Tenth Circuit opinions are included in respondent's appendix. Petitioner sought a writ of certiorari from the United States Supreme Court. That petition was denied on January 22, 1991.

The state court held a hearing on the University's state complaint on December 16, 1988. Petitioner had been provided copies of the University's exhibits, first in June of 1988, and again in August of 1988. These exhibits also had been filed with the Court in advance of the hearing. The bulk of the December 16 hearing time was provided to the Petitioner for his testimony and presentation of exhibits. At the conclusion of the hearing, the court made oral findings of fact and issued an injunction from the bench.¹ The court later issued two abbreviated orders (Pet. App., pp. A.18-A.20). Petitioner's subsequent appeal to the Colorado Court of Appeals resulted in full affirmance of the trial court injunction. (Pet. App., pp. A.1-A.17). On April 15, 1991, the Colorado Supreme Court denied a petition for writ of certiorari. Petitioner now brings this petition to this Court.

The findings of the state and federal courts are similar. The U.S. District Court found that Petitioner continuously files duplicative causes of action which are frivolous, vexatious and without legal merit; that he consistently fails to follow the courts' orders; that he sues judges who have ruled against him; that he has established a pattern of seeking disqualification of judges who rule against him; that he continuously engages in courses of conduct that evidence a disregard for the courts' procedures and a lack of understanding of the rules of evidence and procedures; that he shows a total disregard for the limited resources of the courts and other litigants' right of access to the court; that he files actions and motions for vexatious and harassing purposes with total disregard for their legal merits; and that he factually misleads

Petitioner did not include these findings or this order in his appendix. They are included in Respondent's appendix.

the courts. The court further found that other procedural mechanisms commonly used to discourage meritless claims, such as financial sanctions, have proven ineffective with Petitioner, and that Petitioner's course of conduct would continue unabated unless an injunction was issued.

Likewise, the Boulder County District Court found, in part, as follows:

What is at stake here is the right of access to the judicial system by the public. That right of access is limited by an influx of frivolous and groundless actions or actions which are largely frivolous and groundless.

...

In this case Dr. Uberoi—in these cases Dr. Uberoi has filed an enormous number of motions in each case which unnecessarily expands (sic) the proceedings. There are constant motions for reconsideration and clarification, there are constant motions for disqualification of judges and attorneys who disagree with him, and then lawsuits against judges and attorneys who disagree with him when he is unsuccessful in getting them disqualified.

...

I am also finding that cases that he files derive from other cases and are almost without exception found to be frivolous or groundless or dismissable on some grounds. Even when cases are dismissed and the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court affirm those dismissals, he continues to insist he is right and must constantly repeat the facts of the cases in which he has been wronged.

...

What is clear to me is that most of the cases have no merit whatsoever, and any of those that have some merit, there is a nugget of legitimacy which is lost forever in vexatious and groundless litigation.

Dr. Uberoi seems to believe that the courts exist for his private use...

The number of frivolous and groundless actions which he has filed indicate that Dr. Uberoi files actions without regard for the legal merits of this (sic) case. He files them on the basis of his own personal belief of the legal merits of the case. He has been unsuccessful in every regard except for (a) \$700 plus interest judgment in the *Ellefson* matter, which was offset by a \$3,400 attorneys' fees award for frivolous and groundless claims, and in a settlement for \$500 against each of the defendants in the case involving the unfortunate El Malakhs who finally settled for a pittance in order to resolve the case.

Everything else, volumes and volumes, files and files, cases upon cases contain the failure of Dr. Uberoi to convince any court that his claims have merit.

(R. Vol. VI, pp. 74-77).

The eight state and federal cases which form the bases of the state and federal courts' decisions are discussed in detail in the U.S. District Court order (Resp. App. pp. B.1-B.13). Within these underlying cases, additional state and federal judges have made specific findings of vexatious, frivolous and groundless action by Petitioner, and have in many cases awarded attorneys' fees against Petitioner. Such awards have not deterred the Petitioner from bringing new meritless lawsuits and continuing his pattern of abusive litigation tactics.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

The courts' inherent power to enjoin frivolous and groundless litigation is well-established. The injunction of the Colorado court requires Petitioner to proceed through counsel when he is the plaintiff or proponent of a claim. This sanction is appropriate for this individual *pro se* litigant, who has been found to misrepresent factual matters to the court, and who does not assert a lack of funds to hire counsel.

REASONS FOR DENYING THE PETITION

I.

PETITIONER IS ENJOINED ONLY AS PLAINTIFF OR PROPONENT OF A CLAIM

The injunction issued by the state trial court does not prohibit Petitioner from defending himself in civil actions.

The relief sought by the University is stated in its complaint as follows:

WHEREFORE, the University requests that this court issue a preliminary injunction prohibiting Mahinder S. Uberoi from any further *pro se* appearances as a plaintiff within the Twentieth Judicial District, in new actions as well as in any actions which are pending. The University further requests that this injunction be made permanent.

At the December 16, 1988 hearing, the trial court states as follows after making findings of fact based on the eight cases reviewed by the court:

As a result of all those findings, the court will grant the injunction. The injunction relates to any matters currently pending or which Dr. Uberoi may choose to file in the future in the Twentieth Judicial District except for post-judgment collection procedures and appeals. (R. Vol. VI, p. 80).

At the time this order was issued, Petitioner was the plaintiff in all cases involving the Petitioner which were currently pending in the Twentieth Judicial District, except for the injunction proceeding. The trial court specifically granted Petitioner a thirty day time period in which to file any postjudgment motions in the injunction case (R. Vol. VI, p. 84). Please see Rule 59, Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure. Despite this opportunity, Petitioner filed no postjudgment motion with the court requesting clarification of the court's order as it affects his *pro se* defense in civil actions or reconsideration of any aspect of the order.

The Court of Appeals recognized that the order of injunction was first issued at the December 16 hearing:

From the bench, at the end of the hearing, the trial court issued detailed findings of fact and an injunction that prohibited defendant from filing any documents *pro se* in pending cases in the Twentieth District, and from filing any new *pro se* cases in the district. A written order, later amended, followed.

(Pet. App., p. A.5)

Two written orders (Pet. App., pp. A.1-A.3) were issued by the trial court following the lengthy recitation of findings of fact and the order issued from the bench. It appears likely that these excerpted written orders were for the assistance of the clerk of the court and provided direction regarding what the clerk should accept for filing from Petitioner. The first written order, dated December 27, 1988, directs that Petitioner is prohibited "from filing paperwork of any nature in any current or future pending case in the Twentieth Judicial District, or filing any new case in the Twentieth Judicial District except matters relating to appeal or post-judgment proceedings, unless he has an attorney who enters his or her appearance in any such case." Again, if Petitioner found this written order at variance from the court's oral order of December 16, Petitioner had authority from the court, and

procedural direction from Rule 59, Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure, to file a motion seeking clarification or amendment. He did not do so.

The December 16 written order contained a typographical error. The order states: "The stay is effective January 16, 1989." In fact, the order should state that the stay is effective **until** January 16, 1989. The court issued an amended order on January 23, 1989, to correct this error, and to clarify that on January 16, 1989, the injunction, rather than the stay, became effective.

Petitioner first raised in the Colorado Court of Appeals his theory that the injunction prohibits him from *pro se* defense in civil actions. The Court of Appeals reviewed the transcript of the court's oral findings and order, as well as the two abbreviated written orders. The Court of Appeals interprets the injunction as prohibiting Petitioner only from representing himself as a plaintiff in the Twentieth Judicial District:

Defendant, Mahinder S. Uberoi, appeals the injunction entered by the trial court prohibiting him from representing himself as a plaintiff in any matter other than post-judgment collection proceedings". (Pet. App., p. A.4).

The state court injunction does not prohibit *pro se* defense by Professor Uberoi.

II. THE INJUNCTION DOES NOT PREVENT MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO THE COURTS FOR THIS PETITIONER

Petitioner claims an unidentified "federal right to represent himself in state courts." Petitioner cites no applicable law supporting this assertion. This Court has not recognized a specific right to self-representation in civil cases.

The right of access to the court, however, is well recognized in federal constitutional law. Although this right is not explicitly set forth in the constitution itself, it has been found in the due process clauses of the fifth and fourteenth amendments and in the right to redress grievances established by the first amendment. This right, however, is not without limitation; there is no constitutional right to prosecute an action that is frivolous. *In re McDonald*, 489 U.S. 180, 109 S. Ct. 993, 103 L. Ed. 2d 158 (1989); *Tripati v. Beaman*, 878 F. 2d 351 (10th Cir. 1989); *Hardwick v. Brinson*, 523 F.2d 798 (5th Cir. 1975).

The federal courts have long recognized the right to regulate the activities of abusive litigants through use of the inherent power of the court. Remedies are crafted to fit the unique circumstances of each individual case. See *Procup v. Strickland*, 792 F. 2d 1069 (11th Cir. 1986), and the cases discussed therein. The remedy crafted by the trial court is reviewed on appeal under an abuse of discretion standard. *Procup v. Strickland*, 792 F. 2d at 1074.

Federal courts have established a variety of remedies. The United States District Court for the District of Colorado enjoined a *pro se* litigant from initiating or prosecuting any civil claim in federal district court without the representation of counsel in *People of the State of Colorado v. Carter*, 678 F. Supp. 1484 (D. Colo. 1986). In *State of Colorado v. Fleming*, 726 F. Supp. 1216 (D. Colo. 1989), the court imposed a commonly used remedy of enjoining litigant Fleming from filing actions *pro se* without leave of the court, and without complying with a number of specified orders of the court, requiring that Mr. Fleming attach statements to any new complaint listing all lawsuits in which he was or is a party, listing all judgments against him, identifying any defendant who has been a party to a prior lawsuit involving Mr. Fleming, and setting forth other specified information.

Such injunctive remedies have been used by many courts. In *Tripati v. Beaman*, 878 F.2d. 351 (10th Cir. 1989), the court states at 352-53:

Here, the district court required that plaintiff meet the following preconditions before filing future actions: (1) he must carry a stronger burden of proof that he is economically unable to pay filing fees; (2) he must demonstrate to the court that his action is commenced in good faith and not malicious or "without arguable merit"; (3) his pleadings must be certified as provided by Fed. R. Civ. P. 11; (4) he must include in every complaint filed a list of every previous action filed; and (5) he must send all pleadings to the defendants and provide the court with proof of service. These preconditions are clearly the type of carefully tailored restrictions contemplated by the various courts that have addressed the question of restraints on abusive litigants. See *In re Green*, *supra*. (litigant required to certify that claims advanced have never been raised before); *Green v. White*, 616 F.2d 1054, 1055 (8th Cir. 1980) (litigant required to list all causes previously filed on same, similar, or related actions); *Graham v. Riddle*, 554 F.2d 133, 134-35 (4th Cir. 1977) (prefiling review and denial of leave to file *in forma pauperis* except upon a showing of good cause). Thus, the restrictions imposed were appropriate.

More stringent standards have been imposed on other "career plaintiffs". In *In re McDonald*, *supra*, this Court prohibits Petitioner McDonald from filing any further petitions for extraordinary writs *in forma pauperis*. In so doing, the Court states at 489 U.S. 180, 184:

Every paper filed with the clerk of this court, no matter how repetitious or frivolous, requires some portion of the institution's limited resources. A part of the court's responsibility is to see that these resources are allocated in a way that promotes the interests of justice. The continual processing of Petitioner's frivolous requests for extraordinary writs does not promote that end. Although we have not done so previously, lower courts have issued orders intended to curb serious abuses by persons proceeding *in forma pauperis*.

The court allows *in forma pauperis* filing of requests for relief other than extraordinary writs, so long as McDonald "does not similarly abuse that privilege". *McDonald*, 489 U.S. at 182. The Court thus suggests that further restriction may follow.

Other remedies tailored to fit the factual situation of the case are imposed in *Gelabert v. Lynaugh*, 894 F.2d 746 (5th Cir. 1990) (inmate must pay fine imposed in prior suit before proceeding with instant suit); and *In re Tyler*, 839 F.2d 1290 (8th Cir. 1988) (limiting the number of cases a pro se inmate may file *in forma pauperis*).

The Supreme Court of the State of Colorado has considered and approved the enjoining of *pro se* litigants appearing as plaintiffs or proponents of a claim. In this court's analysis, the requirement that abusive litigants proceed through counsel does not violate the federal constitutional guarantee of meaningful access to the court. Please see *Shotkin v. Kaplan*, 116 Colo. 295, 180 P.2d 1021 (1947); *People v. Spencer*, 524 P.2d 1084 (Colo. 1974); *Board of County Commissioners v. Barday*, 594 P.2d 1057 (Colo. 1979); *People v. Dunlap*, 623 P.2d 408 (Colo. 1981); *Board of County Commissioners v. Howard*, 640 P.2d 1128 (Colo. 1982); and *Board of County Commissioners v. Winslow*, 706 P.2d 792, (Colo. 1985).

III. UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES JUSTIFY THIS INJUNCTION

The requirement that Petitioner proceed through counsel is particularly appropriate to the pattern of litigation established by Petitioner. Petitioner Uberoi misrepresents the facts to the Court. He has never suggested in this proceeding or related proceedings that he lacks the funds to hire counsel. The attorney who represents Petitioner can provide a factual investigation that the court is not equipped to perform. Under the constraints of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11, the attorney must not only satisfy himself that Petitioner's complaints

are legally sound; he also must investigate and determine that sufficient credible facts exist to bring Petitioner's representations before the court. In this sense, the court delegates the work of screening Petitioner Uberoi's complaints from the staff of the court, who cannot investigate the facts, to an attorney, who must do so.

Petitioner Uberoi's situation is different from that of the majority of *pro se* plaintiffs, who are often inmates in the custody of the state or federal government, or are proceeding *in forma pauperis*. Prisoners have an expanded constitutional right of access to the court for the purpose of challenging their convictions and the circumstances of their confinement. *Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817, 97 S. Ct. 1491, 52 L.Ed. 2d. 72 (1977). Restrictions on access to the court for prisoners, therefore, are reviewed under a higher standard than restrictions imposed on non-prisoners. This requires careful distinguishing between remedies allowed by courts in inmate and nonprisoner cases.

Further, many cases involving abuse of the courts by *pro se* litigants concern litigants proceeding *in forma pauperis*. A special remedy, provided by 28 U.S.C. §1915 (d), allows the court to rid itself of frivolous *in forma pauperis* litigation without the need for enjoining of plaintiffs. Section 1915 (d) allows the court to specially review claims to determine whether the claim is frivolous. Please see *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 109 S.Ct.1827, 104 L.Ed.2d 338 (1989), where the court states at 490 U.S. 327:

Section 1915 (d) is designed largely to discourage the filing of, and waste of judicial and private resources upon, baseless lawsuits that paying litigants generally do not initiate because of the costs of bringing suits and because of the threat of sanctions for bringing vexatious suits under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11. To this end, the statute accords judges not only the authority to dismiss a claim based on an indisputably meritless legal theory, but also the unusual power to

pierce the veil of the complaint's factual allegations and dismiss those claims whose factual contentions are clearly baseless.

By paying his own filing fees, yet proceeding without counsel, Petitioner Uberoi evades the primary safeguards that protect our judicial system from frivolous litigation. Petitioner does not weigh the expense of attorneys' fees in determining whether to proceed with litigation. He is able to bring actions that would result in severe sanctions against licensed attorneys, with no consequence to Petitioner. By paying his own filing fees, he escapes the "piercing of the veil of the complaint's factual allegations" that Section 1915 provides. Severe financial sanctions have not deterred the Petitioner. His misrepresentation of facts make prefiling review by the court staff an extraordinary burden with no guarantee of successful exposure of groundless claims. Petitioner has never asserted that he cannot afford to hire counsel. The trial court's remedy of injunction is appropriate to these unique facts, and under these facts does not unconstitutionally limit this Petitioner's access to the court.

IV. PETITIONER'S REMAINING ARGUMENTS ARE MERITLESS

Petitioner claims that the injunction violates his fourteenth amendment right to equal protection and due process, because the University was not a party to some of the cases presented to the trial court for review. Petitioner has raised this issue in the United States District Court, the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, the Boulder District Court, and the Colorado Court of Appeals. He has further attempted to obtain review of this issue by this Court in his petition for writ of certiorari arising from the Tenth Circuit injunction, and in the Colorado Supreme Court in his petition for writ of certiorari in the instant case. Many courts have clearly explained to Petitioner that the court is reviewing pleadings from these cases as evidence, and is not con-

ducting an additional appellate review of the merits of these cases. Despite this, Petitioner persists in asserting that the University has “no standing” to use these documents from other cases as exhibits, and that the trial court lacks subject matter jurisdiction to conduct an appellate review. The trial court did not conduct an appellate review.

Petitioner claims that his due process and equal protection rights were violated when the court issued an injunction from the bench after limiting Petitioner’s case presentation to the two-hour time period scheduled by the court. Respondent’s exhibits were filed with the court in advance of the hearing, along with an offer setting forth the evidentiary grounds for admission of each exhibit (R. Vol. III, pp. 432-438). The transcript of this hearing clearly establishes that Petitioner appeared unprepared to present his exhibits, and spent the bulk of the time allowed for hearing attempting to organize and present documents. The Colorado Court of Appeals found no procedural due process or equal protection violations in this action. This finding is well-founded and should be affirmed.

Petitioner claims that the injunction is “fatally defective” because it states no reason for its issuance. Despite Petitioner’s recognition in paragraph four of the “Questions Presented” section of his petition that the injunction was issued from the bench, Petitioner fails to include the transcript of the court’s findings of fact and conclusions of law in his appendix, along with the two brief written orders following the issuance of the injunction. The court’s careful findings of fact as set forth at hearing render this claim frivolous (Resp. App., pp. A.1-A.7).

Petitioner claims that this case was brought in retaliation for his lobbying for changes in Colorado law, and that the University has committed fraud against the courts and various other entities. Petitioner presents no cogent factual or legal argument establishing a factual basis for these claims.

Petitioner's remaining claims are that the trial judge should have disqualified herself because of bias against him based on previous cases; that the trial court had no jurisdiction to dismiss his counterclaims; and that he should have been granted oral argument in the Colorado Court of Appeals. The Petitioner has failed to establish through the record that oral argument was denied him because of his *pro se* status, his race or his ethnic background. Petitioner presents no reasonable factual or legal argument on any of these three claims.

Petitioner surrendered any further complaint about the form or substance of the trial court order by failing to raise such matters in the trial court, where they could be considered and determined prior to issuance of the order, or on reconsideration of the order.

CONCLUSION

The petition for writ of certiorari should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY
COUNSEL

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Attorneys for Respondent

Dated: November 27, 1991

APPENDIX 1

Regents of the University of
Colorado, Plaintiff,

v.

Mahinder Uberoi, Defendant

88CV1545

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT, HEARING DEC. 16, 1988

THE COURT:

I would like to state first for the record that the reason that I am accepting these exhibits and prohibiting Dr. Uberoi from continuing with his discussion of the various documents is that I believe that regardless of the amount of time that he is given in a court of law, he will use it. He was advised, as was University's counsel, some weeks ago when this matter was set, the matter would conclude at 5 o'clock.

Again, if he were an attorney he would know that that meant that he needed to organize what he wanted to say and what he wanted to offer to fit within the time limits. All attorneys all of the time are required to fit their comments, their testimony, and their exhibits into the time that is allotted by the Court. The Court sets a trial for four days, parties have to be finished in four days and they have to make certain selections and they have to make certain decisions about how they wish to proceed, how quickly they wish to talk, how much they wish to say, what witnesses they wish to offer. And it is not the case that Dr. Uberoi is the only person in the world who is being limited in his opportunity to respond.

In addition, his response is all basically on two or three points, which I think have been made adequately. The first is that the court system is either grossly inefficient or intentionally set on violating his rights and destroys documents and otherwise writes things inadequately or inaccurately so that he has to respond to them.

The second major point is that the University has generated litigation as well by filing motions, by filing things that are inaccurately styled or sent notices which were improperly done which he felt duty bound to bring to the Court's attention.

And the third is that at all times he has felt that he has been wronged in one way or another and that he has a right to bring those wrongs before the Court.

Addressing the last one. There is nothing in this injunction that will prohibit Dr. Uberoi from bringing lawsuits before the Court. The only thing that this injunction would do would be require him to have an attorney. The reason for that is that litigants, such as Dr. Uberoi, are not subject to disciplinary procedures that would ordinarily protect our system against abuse. And that is because attorneys have ethical obligations under Rule 11 of the Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure and also the Code of Professional Responsibility which prohibits them from bringing frivolous and groundless actions, which prohibits them from signing pleadings when they don't have good faith beliefs in the facts and the law and which otherwise require attorneys to act in a responsible fashion with regard to the judicial process. With an attorney Dr. Uberoi can file any actions which are legitimate actions so he would not be prohibited from access to the courts.

What this case is all about is whether under cases such as *Winslow* and *Carter* there is a serious abuse of judicial process going on. And I conclude, though I am going to lay this out in some detail, that "serious" is much too soft a word for what is occurring. What is occurring is inexcusable, is outrageous and is beyond the limits of the toleration of the judicial system.

What is at stake here is the right of access to the judicial system by the public. That right of access is limited by an influx of frivolous and groundless actions or actions which are largely frivolous and groundless. And that is because we have not enough clerks to respond to what is, as I understand,

a 25 percent increase in filing in the Twentieth Judicial District in the last year. We're constantly being limited in the number of people that we can hire, the clerks of the court are always busy trying to meet the needs of the public. So it is not just judges' resources; judicial resources include the sources of the entire system, clerks, division clerks who must work on these cases constantly rather than work on legitimate matters are being paid by the public.

In addition, this half day, the other half days, the weeks of research required to determine that the constant barrage of pleadings have no merit, prevents other persons from having access to the judicial system and waste judicial resources. That the University had to bring this action and that I had to hear it for half a day meant, at the very least, just as one example, that instead of being in my office and ruling on pending cases where people are legitimately waiting to hear what the Court's ruling is, that I am here and not there.

In this case Dr. Uberoi—in these cases, Dr. Uberoi has filed an enormous number of motions in each case which unnecessarily expands the proceedings. There are constant motions for reconsideration and clarification, there are constant motions for disqualifications of judges and attorneys who disagree with him, and then lawsuits against judges and attorneys who disagree with him when he is unsuccessful in getting them disqualified.

Kindly enough, Dr. Uberoi has attached to his motion for continuance and disqualification of me yet again in this case the notice that he sent to the Attorney General that he intends to file suit against me for \$1.5 million alleging various things which are by and large that I have ruled against him in various cases. I'm not commenting on the merits of that case, it is simply another example of Dr. Uberoi—what I call process paranoia which is that he believes that we are all conspiring to deprive him of his rights when, in fact, we are trying to provide him with a forum for just claims.

Rather than go through each and every one of the lawsuits which have been presented by the University to show that Dr. Uberoi's claims are by and large frivolous and groundless or dismissed on various grounds, I am going to specifically incorporate into my findings the allegations of the University's Complaint Part 7, which I believe lists all of those and a summary of what has occurred in each of those cases.

I am also finding that cases that he files derive from other cases and are almost without exception found to be frivolous or groundless or dismissible on some grounds. Even when cases are dismissed and the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court affirm those dismissals, he continues to insist that he is right and must constantly repeat the facts of the cases in which he has been wronged.

What is, in some ways, sad about this case is that on a few occasions Dr. Uberoi may have had claims which may have had some merits. For example, I suppose that someone ran into his car and he was given \$700 for that; a University employee may have pushed him, he may have felt that he had some legitimate argument regarding the Open Records Act and apparently the legislature ultimately agreed with him; his neighbors may have been encroaching on his land. But rather than suing for negligence, suing for simple assault, bringing a case under the Open Records Act and keeping the matter to a claim for records under the Open Records Act, mediating with his neighbors or suing on a simple claim for removal of the shed, his actions are always expanded alarmingly beyond any rational procedure, and if he were an attorney, beyond any ethical manner of handling the case.

What is clear to me is that most of the cases have no merit whatsoever and any of those that have some merit, there is a nugget of legitimacy which is lost forever in vexatious and groundless litigation.

Dr. Uberoi seems to believe that the courts exist for his private use. The courts are a public institution. He shows no

regard for the limit of resources of the court and other litigants' right of access to the Court. He believes in his own position so completely and with such missionary vigor that there is no chance that anyone rational or irrational will ever be able to convince him that he is not being wronged and conspired against.

The number of frivolous and groundless actions which he has filed indicate that Dr. Uberoi files actions without regard for the legal merits of this case. He files them on the basis of his own personal belief about the legal merits of the case. He has been unsuccessful in every regard except for \$700 plus interest judgment in the *Ellefson* matter, which was offset by a \$3,400 attorneys' fees award for frivolous and groundless claims and in a settlement for \$500 against each of the defendants in the case involving the unfortunate El Malakhes who finally settled for a pittance in order to resolve the case.

Everything else, volumes and volumes, files and files, cases upon cases contain the failure of Dr. Uberoi to convince any court that his claims have merit. I understand that many of the things that Dr. Uberoi has filed in these cases are in response to actions filed by the University, but the conclusion is inescapable: if he hadn't filed the actions to start with then he never would have anything to respond to.

In order to grant an injunction I must find a number of different things, one of which is the likelihood of success. I think that the statements that I have just made indicate that I believe that the University has a strong likelihood of success. At least two courts, if not more, have found that Dr. Uberoi's actions are in whole or in part frivolous and groundless, and the files themselves speak loudly as to the expansion of unnecessary cases which even if they did have some merit should have been focused, should have been done in an expeditious and clear manner.

I also find that there is no plain, speedy, adequate remedy of law, there is no remedy for the citizens of Boulder County

whose court systems are bogged down by the frivolous lawsuits of Dr. Uberoi. The University which must have standing to bring this case also has no plain, speedy, or accurate (sic) remedy of the law because they are currently involved in at least two lawsuits pending in the Twentieth Judicial District.

There is real immediate irreparable injury. There is a constant use of the State's lawyers to respond to claims and motions filed by Dr. Uberoi. In one case I awarded over \$30,000 in costs and attorneys' fees which have been expended by the citizens of the State of Colorado because of Dr. Uberoi's actions. He, as an indication of his perseverance and the unlikelihood that he will ever get the message from any court, even in this action, he has counter-claimed for conspiracy, for constitutional violation, and for malfeasance in various ways. He has alleged that I have destroyed, myself, or encouraged the courts' staff to destroy, hundreds of pages of the record in 83CV625, an outrageous allegation which, of course, has no factual basis.

If I am required to balance the equities, which I am, I need to look at whether Dr. Uberoi will continue to have access to the courts even though the injunction is imposed. He cannot argue that this litigation is too expensive for him to afford an attorney. At the last tally he had something like 110- \$115,000 in attorneys' fees assessed against him on the basis of frivolous and groundless actions. He obviously has the financial resources to continue with these lawsuits; he pays for transcripts, he posted a bond with a cashier's check, and he has never alleged that he is poor and needs to proceed *pro se* because he is unable to afford counsel.

I think that Ms. Fulton raises an interesting question. Either—there are several possibilities—Dr. Uberoi knows that he has no claims and insists on bringing them, in which case he needs an attorney to prohibit him from doing that, or he has no claims but he believes that he does in which case someone who is schooled in the law should advise him that he does not in order to protect him from additional attorney fees awards, or he has some good claims sometimes on a limited

basis but he is unable to present them in a manner which is recognized by the court and ends up with them—his having to pay enormous attorney fees. It doesn't really matter to me which of those three exist and I don't want to sort that out, but whichever of those three exist it is inescapable that Dr. Uberoi needs an attorney, not only to protect the system but also to protect his own interests.

With regard to the *status quo*. The *status quo* that I need to create for the duration of whatever it is that's going on in this case is to allow Dr. Uberoi access at the same time as I protect the system from serious abuse. It's my opinion that the courts have been held hostage by a man whose weapon is the manipulation of the desire of courts to maintain a just and democratic society through an open court system. Because he has that weapon, I believe that he must be disarmed of that weapon. By requiring him to have an attorney he will still have the right to bring legitimate claims in a proper manner and he will still sustain the benefits of the judicial process which we all enjoy.

As a result of all those findings, the Court will grant the injunction. The injunction relates to any matters currently pending or which Dr. Uberoi may choose to file in the future in the Twentieth Judicial District except for post judgment collection procedures and appeals.

APPENDIX 2

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO

Civil Action No. 88-F-1323

BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, Plaintiffs,

vs.

MAHINDER S. UBEROI, Defendant.

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Sherman G. Finesilver, Chief Judge

Plaintiff Board of Regents seeks to enjoin defendant Mahinder S. Uberoi from filing *pro se* lawsuits and requests a permanent injunction pursuant to Rule 65 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

Defendant is a tenured professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder. We granted a preliminary injunction by Memorandum Opinion and Order dated March 24, 1989. Trial on the merits was held on August 21, 1989. Despite full notice and knowledge of the trial date, the defendant failed to appear and no witnesses appeared on his behalf. By this order we grant plaintiff's request for permanent injunction.

Jurisdiction in this matter arises from the court's inherent authority to control judicial actions taken by litigants who come before the court. *People of the State of Colorado v. Carter*, 678 F.Supp. 1484, 1485-86 (D. Colo. 1986). Further, plaintiff has standing to pursue this matter. *In re Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d 1254 (2nd Cir. 1984).

Although there is a constitutional right to access to the courts, there is "no constitutional right of access to the courts to prosecute an action that is frivolous or malicious." *Phillips v. Carey*, 638 F.2d 207, 208 (10th Cir. 1981). In order to protect the rights of other litigants to access to the courts, and to protect defendants from harassing, abusive, and meritless litigation, courts have authority to place reasonable restrictions on litigants who abuse the judicial process. *Phillips v. Carey*, 638 F.2d 207, 209 (10th Cir. 1981); *Theriault v. Silber*, 574 F.2d 197 (5th Cir. 1978); *People of the State of Colorado v. Carter*, 678 F.Supp. 1484, 1486 (D. Colo. 1986).

I.

Defendant has filed six actions in Colorado state courts and two in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado. As illustrated below, Professor Uberoi has acted frivolously or vexatiously in many matters involved in the lawsuits. The issues before us are whether Professor Uberoi should be enjoined from proceeding as a *pro se* plaintiff in this federal district, and whether that action is a reasonable restriction warranted by his abuse of the legal process. In so doing, we have considered all the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing for preliminary injunction and orders by the various courts in which Professor Uberoi has appeared. We have also considered evidence presented at the trial on permanent injunction.

Professor Uberoi's extensive legal dealings have exposed him to a smattering of knowledge of the legal process. Yet, based upon the evidence presented, including a review of the files of the two cases filed in this district, and proceedings in state courts, it is apparent that he either does not understand important basic concepts of jurisdiction, courtroom procedure, and the appellate process, or that he has chosen to ignore these concepts. While the court has an obligation to give *pro se* litigants wide latitude in their dealings with the court, the court cannot countenance repetitious, meritless and unduly expansive filings.

II.

We review previous case filings involving defendant:

Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al., 82-LW-806, (U.S. Dist. Ct. Colo.), 1982; *aff'd*, 86-2186, slip op. (10th Cir. July 8, 1987); *cert. denied*, 87-1351 (U.S. April 4, 1984); *aff'd* 87-2219, slip op. (10th Cir. July 8, 1988); *cert. denied*, 88-1127 (U.S. February 21, 1989).

This was a suit alleging civil rights claims against the University of Colorado and sixty-four individual defendants. After five years of litigation the court dismissed Professor Uberoi's action for his failure to comply with the court's discovery orders.

Professor Uberoi filed appeals in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals based on Judge Lee West's dismissal of the action and award of attorney's fees against him. The dismissal was affirmed on appeal. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 86-2186, slip op. (10th Cir. July 8, 1987). Petition for writ of certiorari was denied. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 87-1351 (U.S., April 4, 1984). The award for attorneys' fees was also affirmed. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 87-2219, slip op. (10th Cir. July 8, 1988). Certiorari was again denied. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, 88-1127 (U.S., February 21, 1989). To date, the attorneys' fees remain unpaid.

Uberoi v. Kirby and State Farm Insurance Co., 83S876-8 (Boulder County Court, Colorado, 1983); *aff'd*, 84CV0842-2 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1984); *cert. denied*, 85SC2 (Sup. Ct. Colo. 1985).

This suit arose from a 1979 traffic accident involving Professor Uberoi. The county court dismissed this case without prejudice to refile, because Professor Uberoi failed to include the insured, Mr. Ellefson, in the lawsuit. Rather than refile the suit and include the proper party, Professor Uberoi took an appeal to the Boulder District Court (84CV0842-2). He

lost the appeal. Petition for writ of certiorari in the Colorado Supreme Court was denied.

Uberoi v. Ellefson, Kirby and State Farm Insurance Co., 85CV1686-5 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1985); *cert. denied*, 87SA145 (Sup. Ct. Colo. 1989).

Professor Uberoi instituted additional lawsuits stemming from the 1979 traffic accident. Professor Uberoi received a favorable judgment for \$700.00. The favorable \$700.00 judgment was used to offset the \$3,098.00 award for attorneys' fees. The court found that Professor Uberoi acted frivolously and vexatiously and ordered him to pay the attorneys' fees. Professor Uberoi filed untimely motions and failed to follow the court's orders. His appeal to the Supreme Court of Colorado was transferred to the Colorado Court of Appeals, where it is pending.

Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al., 82CV0953-3 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1982); *aff'd* 686 P.2d 785 (Colo. 1984).

This case stemmed from a public records request by Professor Uberoi. The state court ruled that the Public Records Act in effect in Colorado at that time did not apply to the University of Colorado. Professor Uberoi filed a motion for reconsideration. The Colorado Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's ruling.

Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al., 83CV625-5 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1988); remanded, 84SA9 (Sup. Ct. Colo. 1988); on appeal, 88CA0714 (Colo. Ct. App. 1988).

This case arises out of an alleged detention and assault upon Professor Uberoi. Professor Uberoi brought suit against the University of Colorado, its police officers, attorneys and other employees. The court dismissed the case for failure to state a claim. He appealed to the Colorado Supreme Court

and upon remand the trial court entered summary judgment for all defendants. His appeal is pending in the Colorado Court of Appeals.

Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al., 85CV2080-2 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1985); on appeal, 89SA228 (Sup. Ct. Colo. 1989).

This case stems from the denial of certain records to Professor Uberoi under the Open Records Act and an unrelated traffic stop by a University police officer. In a hearing on the Open Records Act, Judge Murray Richtel ruled that some of the requested records should be disclosed while others were protected. As a result of the ruling, Professor Uberoi sought disciplinary actions against Judge Richtel, discussed below.

Subsequent to Judge Richtel's ruling, another hearing on the Open Records Act was held before Judge Morris Sandstead. The May 2, 1989 ruling and order of Judge Sandstead provides further evidence of Professor Uberoi's persistent and ongoing abuse of judicial process. The order points out Professor Uberoi's clear lack of proof with respect to certain claims contained in his complaint. The order clearly states that Professor Uberoi failed to present any evidence, as to his interference with contract claim, that defendants had any knowledge of the traffic stop. Rule and Order, 85CV2080-2 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, May 2, 1989) (citation omitted). Judge Sandstead, recognizing the applicability of the injunction against Professor Uberoi issued by the Honorable Roxanne Bailin in *Board of Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uberoi*, 88CV1545-5 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, December 16, 1988), stated: "Pursuant to the terms of the injunction, the court has not considered, nor will it consider in the future, any new motions filed *pro se* by plaintiff after January 16, 1989, except as they might relate to post-judgment collection or an appeal." Despite this order, and another admonition subsequent to this order, Professor Uberoi filed several additional *pro se* pleadings.

Uberoi v. Richtel, 87-Z-961, (U.S. Dist. Ct. Dist. Colo. 1987); notice of appeal filed June 16, 1989.

As a result of Judge Murray Richtel's ruling and conduct in the case noted above, 85CV2080-2 (Boulder District Court), Professor Uberoi brought suit against Judge Richtel in federal court. The claim asserted, *inter alia*, that Judge Richtel misinterpreted a state statute, discriminated against Professor Uberoi and stayed judgment in order to prevent Professor Uberoi his right of appeal.

This action against Judge Richtel was dismissed. Order of dismissal, May 19, 1989. Professor Uberoi filed a notice of appeal on June 16, 1989, which is pending.

Uberoi v. Malakh, et al., 84CV1907-5 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1984).

This suit arises from a stop work order issued against Professor Uberoi when he began construction of a fence that appeared to exceed Boulder height limits. Defendants included the City, its employees and Professor Uberoi's neighbors.

This case is still pending, except that certain defendants have been dismissed pursuant to Professor Uberoi's acceptance of their offer of judgment.

Board of Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uberoi, 84CV1545 (Boulder District Court, Colorado, 1988); certiorari filed, 89SC244 (Colo. Sup. Ct. 1989); on appeal, 89CA0124 (Colo. Ct. App. 1989).

In this action a Colorado state district judge issued an injunction preventing Professor Uberoi from appearing *pro se* in all proceedings in the district court of Boulder County. The state court's findings of fact and conclusions are illuminating on issues involved in this litigation. As each court determines its own jurisdiction, the order is not binding on us on principles of collateral estoppel or *res judicata*. The status of his

appeals are unclear. Professor Uberoi filed a writ of certiorari in the Supreme Court of Colorado while an appeal is pending in the Colorado Court of Appeals.

III.

The instant case was filed on behalf of the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado. Professor Uberoi's conduct in this matter clearly illustrates why he should be prevented from further *pro se* representation. He has filed repetitive motions to disqualify the instant judge and the U.S. Magistrate. The motions for disqualification have been rejected by Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. As we detailed, there are continuing failures to follow court rules, filing dates and accepted court procedures.

The defendant appeared before the court at the hearing on preliminary injunction on February 28, 1989. At the time the court set trial date for the three-week trial calendar commencing August 7, 1989 and the Pretrial Conference for June 19, 1989. The court granted plaintiff's motion for preliminary injunction. The court ordered the defendant to retain counsel within thirty days or face dismissal of his counterclaims. The defendant did not act. The counterclaims were dismissed.

On March 27, 1989, the case was referred to United States Magistrate Donald Abram for the pretrial and discovery matters. Professor Uberoi was again notified of the following dates: Pretrial Conference to be held on Monday, June 19, 1989 and instructions for submitting the pretrial order; discovery cut-off on June 15, 1989; trial scheduled for three week trial calendar commencing August 7, 1989.

On June 15, 1989, defendant filed a motion for continuance of the dates set for pretrial order and trial. In support of this motion, defendant stated: "Plaintiff has refused to cooperate in discovery. Defendant is filing motion to compel. After paper discovery, Defendant will depose several witnesses. The discovery has not proceeded to a point to permit the prepara-

tion of pretrial order for trial to jury on counterclaims nor trial to the court on claims, nor to set a date for trial."

Also on June 15, 1989, defendant filed a motion to disqualify Magistrate Donald Abram. Defendant asserted that the magistrate "willfully denied [defendant] due process and equal protection guaranteed by the Constitution." The magistrate established dates for completion of discovery and pretrial conferences, and denied a motion by the defendant.

Both of defendant's motions were denied by Order of the court on June 16, 1989.

The pretrial order was entered by Magistrate Abram on June 19, 1989. Plaintiff informed the magistrate it did not intend to call any witnesses. As reflected in the order, defendant stated he would call himself as an expert witness and that he intended to call over four dozen witnesses in person or introduce their depositions at trial.

On July 20, 1989, Professor Uberoi filed a motion to continue discovery cutoff. In support of his motion, Professor Uberoi stated: "Considering the present status of the case, Uberoi has listed over fifty witnesses and plans to present extensive exhibits and analysis relating to false claims and his defenses in other cases which will require six weeks of trial time which cannot be fitted into a three week trailing trial calendar. Further discovery should simplify issues, produce stipulations and reduce trial time." This court denied that motion by Order dated July 20, 1989.

On August 1, 1989, we directed the parties to submit trial materials on or before August 7, 1989. We also directed the parties to submit witness lists stating the nature of the testimony of each witness. Trial was unequivocally set for August 21, 1989 at 9:00 a.m.

On August 7, 1989, Professor Uberoi filed a motion for continuance. He stated: "Uberoi assumed that he would be

given reasonable notice of the specific trial date and the time allowed for trial so that the witnesses could be subpoenaed on appropriate dates. It would be unreasonable to subpoena witnesses on a continuing basis for weeks." Professor Uberoi stated in the motion he received the court's August 1, 1989 Minute Order directing parties to submit trial materials on August 4, 1989. Defendant requested "that deadlines for discovery be continued for at least six months and that the trial be set when the case is at issue."

On August 7, 1989, the court directed the parties to submit trial materials on or before August 10, 1989. The court stated **"NO FURTHER EXTENSIONS OF TIME WILL BE GRANTED!"** The plaintiff complied with the order. Defendant did not comply, and failed to submit trial materials, witness names or exhibit lists.

On Friday, August 18, 1989, at 3:21 p.m. Professor Uberoi by written motion requested the court to "grant continuance of trial set for August 21, 1989, and that discovery be permitted for a year and a status report be submitted then and that trial be held after the case is at issue; and that the court provide such further and additional relief it deems just and proper."

On August 18, 1989, in the late afternoon, the motion for continuance of trial was denied. The parties were directed to appear for trial on Monday, August 21, 1989 at 9:00 a.m.

On Monday, August 21, 1989, the court called the case for trial. Plaintiff's counsel appeared, but defendant did not. No witnesses appeared on behalf of defendant. The case proceeded to trial. Illustrative of the irresponsible course of conduct by Professor Uberoi is the fact that on *August 18, 1989*, defendant filed a motion for this court to order the United States Attorney for Colorado to seek indictment against plaintiff's attorneys in a completely separate court case that has already been tried in this federal district, affirmed by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals and certiorari denied by the Supreme

Court. The outstanding motion to seek indictments against plaintiff's attorneys was denied. The case proceeded to trial in the absence of Professor Uberoi.

IV.

It is readily apparent that Professor Uberoi continuously disregards and refuses to follow standard methods of appeal. Instead, he brings duplicate lawsuits. Professor Uberoi exhibits a pattern of seeking disqualification of judges who rule against him. He has sought disqualification of at least eight judicial officers: State District and County Judges Bailin, Enwall, Richtel, and Sandstead, Federal District Judges Matsch, West, and Finesilver, and United States Magistrate Abram. Most recently, on October 28, 1988 he sought disqualification of the state judge presiding in Boulder District Court who issued an injunction against Professor Uberoi's acting in a *pro se* capacity. Defendant renewed the motion on December 13, 1988. Professor Uberoi testified at the hearing on preliminary injunction that he does not always seek disqualification of judges who rule against him, and cited as an example that he did not seek to disqualify Judge West in *Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al.*, 82-LW-806 (D. Colo. 1986). However, he testified before this court that he regretted failing to do so, and that he believed his problems would have been solved by disqualifying Judge West. Our review of the case file reveals that Professor Uberoi did in fact move to disqualify Judge West and to vacate all his orders on December 11, 1985. That motion was denied on December 16, 1985.

Professor Uberoi consistently disregards the procedures of courts in which he appears. His pleadings establish his lack of understanding of the rules of evidence and court procedure. His belligerent pursuit of meritless claims illustrates his complete disregard for the limited resources of the federal and state courts and the legitimate need of other persons to have access to courts. A licensed attorney, conducting himself in the same manner as this defendant, would be subject to the severest sanctions under Rules 11 and 16 of the Federal Rules

of Civil Procedure, 28 U.S.C. § 1927, and Code of Professional Responsibility. The fact that Professor Uberoi pursues his meritless claims in a *pro se* capacity does not excuse him from compliance with the rules of this court.

Professor Uberoi files actions and motions for vexatious and harassing purposes with total disregard for legal merits. His redundant pursuit of meritless claims tax the time, energy and resources of the participants involved, and the courts in which he files suits.

Professor Uberoi has misled courts. For example, in *Uberoi v. University of Colorado, et al.*, 82-LW-806 (D. Colo. 1986), Professor Uberoi represented to the trial and appellate courts that discovery in the case had hardly begun, when forty-seven depositions were taken or scheduled to have been taken. He maintained that the discovery cutoff of April 15, 1986 had not been set until February 20, 1986, when it in fact had been set at a status conference on November 26, 1985, and included in an order of December 4, 1985. Finally, he denied that trial in the case had been set for June 2, 1986, when that date had been set on February 19, 1986.

V.

For the reasons stated, it is necessary to permanently enjoin Professor Uberoi from filing or appearing in any civil action in this district in which he is the proponent of a claim, without representation by a licensed attorney. We find that other procedural mechanisms to discourage meritless claims have proven unsuccessful with Professor Uberoi. Financial sanctions can be imposed against *pro se* litigants under Rules 11 and 16 and 28 U.S.C. § 1927. However, repeated sanctions imposed against Professor Uberoi have proven to be ineffective.

We have carefully considered imposition of sanctions under Rules 11 and 16 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and in our opinion this approach would be unavailing. Sanctions imposed against Professor Uberoi in *Uberoi v. University of*

Colorado, 82-LW-806 (D. Colo. 1986), described above, have never been satisfied.

We expressly find that Professor Uberoi has flagrantly and repeatedly abused judicial process by filing meritless lawsuits and motions. It appears that this course of conduct will continue unabated unless preventive measures are imposed. To ensure the integrity of the judicial process, the court must impose some limitations on Professor Uberoi's ability to file unwarranted lawsuits. Our injunction does not deny Professor Uberoi's access to the court. It appears that Professor Uberoi has the means to obtain representation for meritorious claims.

ORDER

It is hereby ORDERED that defendant Mahinder S. Uberoi is permanently enjoined from proceeding as a proponent of any civil claim in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado without the representation of an attorney licensed to practice in the State of Colorado and admitted to practice in this court. It is further ordered that all cases pending in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado in which Professor Uberoi is the proponent of a claim, and in which he does not proceed reasonably to employ counsel to represent him, shall be subject to dismissal. This order does not apply to litigation currently pending before Judge Weinsheink, *Uberoi v. Richtel*, 87-Z-961. It is further ORDERED that:

The Clerk of the Court is DIRECTED not to accept any pleadings initiating a civil action or any case filings by Professor Uberoi unless he is represented by an attorney licensed to practice in the State of Colorado and by the United States District Court for the District of Colorado.

This order applies to any post-trial motions that defendant may file in this matter. Any post-trial motions relating to this case or other case filings of any nature must be filed

through a licensed attorney admitted to practice before this court. The court denies any request for a stay of execution of this order.

This order constitutes findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Done this 25th day of September, 1989 at Denver, Colorado. By the Court:

Sherman G. Finesilver, Chief Judge
United States District Court

APPENDIX 3

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE TENTH CIRCUIT

THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO,
Plaintiff-Appellee,

vs.

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Defendant-Appellant.

Nos. 89-1117,
89-1304, 89-1337
(D.C. No.
88-F-1323)
(D. Colorado)

ORDER AND JUDGEMENT*

Before MCKAY, MOORE, and BRORBY, Circuit Judges.

Defendant-appellant Mahinder S. Uberoi appeals a district court order permanently enjoining him from filing *pro se* lawsuits in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado.

I.

Mahinder S. Uberoi is a tenured professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder who has filed six actions in Colorado state courts and two in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado. Plaintiff-appellee Board of

This order and judgment has no precedential value and shall not be cited, or used by any court within the Tenth Circuit, except for purposes of establishing the doctrines of the law of the case, res judicata, or collateral estoppel. 10th Cir. R. 36.3.

Regents of the University of Colorado (the University) initiated this action to enjoin Professor Uberoi from filing *pro se* lawsuits. Professor Uberoi filed a number of counterclaims against the University.

On March 24, 1989, the district court entered a preliminary injunction prohibiting Professor Uberoi from filing or appearing in any civil action in the District Court of Colorado in which he is the proponent of a claim without representation by a licensed attorney. In its order, the court required that Professor Uberoi proceed through counsel on his counterclaims. Because Professor Uberoi did not meet the court's condition that counsel be retained within thirty days, his counterclaims were dismissed on June 16, 1989.

A hearing was held on August 21, 1989, on the merits of the University's motion for permanent injunction. Despite full notice and knowledge of the hearing date, Professor Uberoi failed to appear, and no witnesses appeared on his behalf. On September 25, 1989, the district court granted a permanent injunction barring Professor Uberoi from filing lawsuits *pro se*. The district court reviewed the previous case filings involving Professor Uberoi and concluded that "[t]o ensure the integrity of the judicial process, the court must impose some limitations on Professor Uberoi's ability to file unwarranted lawsuits." The court explained how Professor Uberoi disregards the procedures of courts in which he appears by filing actions and motions for vexatious and harassing purposes with total disregard for legal merits. The district court noted how Professor Uberoi has a pattern of seeking disqualification of judicial officers who rule against him. The district court cited several instances where Professor Uberoi misled the court or missed deadlines. Finally, the court observed how Professor Uberoi continuously disregards and refuses to follow standard methods of appeal, instead filing duplicative lawsuits or commencing suits against the judges who have ruled against him. We agree with the district court's conclusions and affirm the order enjoining Professor Uberoi from proceeding *pro se* as a proponent of any civil claim.

II.

Professor Uberoi challenges the district court's jurisdiction because the University's complaint was based in part on allegations of misconduct in state courts. However, the district court merely accepted and reviewed pleadings from state court actions and other federal suits as evidence on the issue of Professor Uberoi's competency in representing himself in legal proceedings.

A district court has power under 28 U.S.C. § 1651(a) to enjoin litigants who abuse the court system by harassing their opponents. *Tripati v. Beaman*, 878 F.2d 351, 352 (10th Cir. 1989).

In *Cotner v. Hopkins*, 795 F.2d 900, 902-03 (10th Cir. 1986), this court affirmed clearly tailored preconditions imposed upon a vexatious litigant. "Even onerous conditions" may be imposed so long as they are designed to assist the district court in curbing the particular abusive behavior. However, they cannot be so burdensome as to deny a litigant meaningful access to the courts. *Tripati*, 878 F.2d at 352.

In this case, the district court enjoined Professor Uberoi from proceeding without the representation of an attorney. This restriction was carefully tailored to abate Professor Uberoi's repeated *pro se* filing of unwarranted lawsuits and motions. Recognizing that repeated sanctions imposed against Professor Uberoi have never proven to be effective, the district court concluded that preventative measures were necessary due to his flagrant and repeated abuse of the judicial process. While litigiousness alone will not support an injunction restricting filing activities, injunctions are proper where the litigant's abusive and lengthy history is properly set forth. *Id.* at 353.

Furthermore, this restriction is different from the requirement imposed in *Tripati v. Beaman*, where this court remanded part of the order imposing restrictions on a plaintiff's future filings because there were no guidelines as to what plaintiff

must do to obtain the court's permission to file an action. 878 F.2d at 354. Here, the district court clearly stated that Professor Uberoi may proceed with his claims if he is represented by an attorney licensed to practice in the State of Colorado and admitted to practice in the United States District Court for the District of Colorado.

The right of access to the courts is neither absolute nor unconditional, and there is no constitutional right of access to the courts to prosecute an action that is frivolous. *Tripati*, 878 F.2d at 351 (citing *In re Green*, 669 F.2d 779, 785 (D.C. Cir. 1981), *Phillips v. Carey*, 638 F.2d 207, 208 (10th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 450 U.S. 985 (1981)). "No one, rich or poor, is entitled to abuse the judicial process." *Tripati*, 878 F.2d at 353. In this case, the condition that Professor Uberoi must be represented by counsel does not deny his access to the courts because he has the means to obtain representation for meritorious claims.

For the same reasons, we affirm the district court's dismissal of Professor Uberoi's counterclaims after he failed to retain an attorney as ordered by the court on March 24, 1989. The district court was exercising its authority to protect the University from harassing litigation and to protect its own calendar from further frivolous and time-consuming claims.

We also reject Professor Uberoi's contention that the University is without standing to bring this action. The University has met its burden of showing "a history of litigation entailing vexation, harassment and needless expense to [other parties] and 'an unnecessary burden on the courts and their supporting personnel.'" *In re Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d 1254 (2d Cir. 1984) (quoting *In re Hartford Textile Corp.*, 681 F.2d 895, 897 (2d Cir. 1982), *cert. denied*, 459 U.S. 1206 (1983)).

III.

We reject Professor Uberoi's contention that under 28 U.S.C. § 455, Chief Judge Finesilver is disqualified from hearing the University's injunctive request. The factual ground for his

request is that the University presented Judge Finesilver with an honorary doctorate during the pendency of this case.¹ The district court rejected Professor Uberoi's motion for recusal, noting the offer and acceptance of the honorary degree occurred before the University's injunctive action was filed. In addition, the court concluded Professor Uberoi's status as a faculty member negated any contentions that the court would be biased in favor of other University officials any more so than in favor of Dr. Uberoi as a University professor.

Because the decision to recuse is within the sound discretion of the district judge, we review denial of recusal for abuse of that discretion. *Hinman v. Rogers*, 831 F.2d 937, 938 (10th Cir. 1987). Under 28 U.S.C. § 455, the test is whether a reasonable person, knowing all the relevant facts, would harbor doubts about the judge's impartiality. *Id.* at 939. Without more, merely having attended or graduated from a school, which is a party, is not a reasonable basis for questioning a judge's impartiality. *Brody v. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, 664 F.2d 10, 11 (1st Cir. 1981), *cert. denied*, 455 U.S. 1027 (1982); *see also Easley v. Michigan Board of Regents*, 853 F.2d 1351 (6th Cir. 1988). These courts reasoned that "[a]ll judges come to the bench with a background of experiences, associations, and viewpoints. This background alone is seldom sufficient in itself to provide a reasonable basis for appeal." *Easley*, 853 F.2d at 1356. Similarly, the mere association of a judge with a party without indication the judge stands to obtain financial or other gain from a particular outcome may be

¹Professor Uberoi also claims Judge Finesilver is disqualified in this matter because fellow District Judge Carrigan was a defendant in one of the actions on which the University's injunctive complaint is based. However, this request for injunctive relief is a separate matter which does not require relitigation of that case. Therefore, Judge Finesilver's impartiality is not at issue, and disqualification on this ground is not required.

insufficient to mandate disqualification. *Brody*, 664 F.2d at 11. When a judge is awarded an honorary degree from a school which is a party in current proceedings, there may be a stronger case for recusal. However, in this case, the offer and acceptance of the honorary degree occurred before the university filed this injunctive action. Therefore, the honorary degree was not an interest which could be substantially affected by the outcome of the proceeding.

This case differs from *Liljeberg v. Health Services Acquisition Corp.*, 486 U.S. 847 (1988), where the Supreme Court affirmed the disqualification of a trial judge who was a trustee of a university which had a substantial financial interest in the subject matter before the trial judge. In this case, Judge Finesilver is not serving as a trustee and has no financial interest at stake in these proceedings.

IV.

We conclude that many of the issues appealed by Professor Uberoi are not properly before this court. Professor Uberoi erroneously claims the district court reviewed and relitigated several of his previous case filings in the permanent injunction trial. Thus, Professor Uberoi seeks review of several issues which were raised in 82-LW-806 and the appeals filed from that action. He also raises the issue of the propriety of the transfer of 82-LW-806 to Judge West. Judge West dismissed 82-LW-806 for Professor Uberoi's failure to comply with the court's discovery orders. This court affirms both the dismissal and award of attorneys fees against Professor Uberoi. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, No. 86-2186, slip. op. (10th Cir. July 8, 1987) (dismissal); *Uberoi v. University of Colorado*, No. 87-2219, slip. op. (10th Cir. July 8, 1988) (attorneys fees). Issues arising out of 82-LW-806 were decided in those actions and are not properly before this court. All other matters pending in this case not specifically resolved are now moot.

The order of the district court is AFFIRMED. The mandate shall issue forthwith.

Entered for the Court

John P. Moore
Circuit Judge

Supreme Court, U
FILED
DEC 19 1991
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No. 91-342

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1991

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,
Petitioner,

v.

BOARD OF REGENTS of the UNIVERSITY
of COLORADO
Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to
Colorado Court of Appeals

REPLY TO BRIEF IN OPPOSITION

Mahinder S. Uberoi, *pro se*
819 Sixth Street
Boulder, Colorado 80302
(303) 442-2879

December 19, 1991

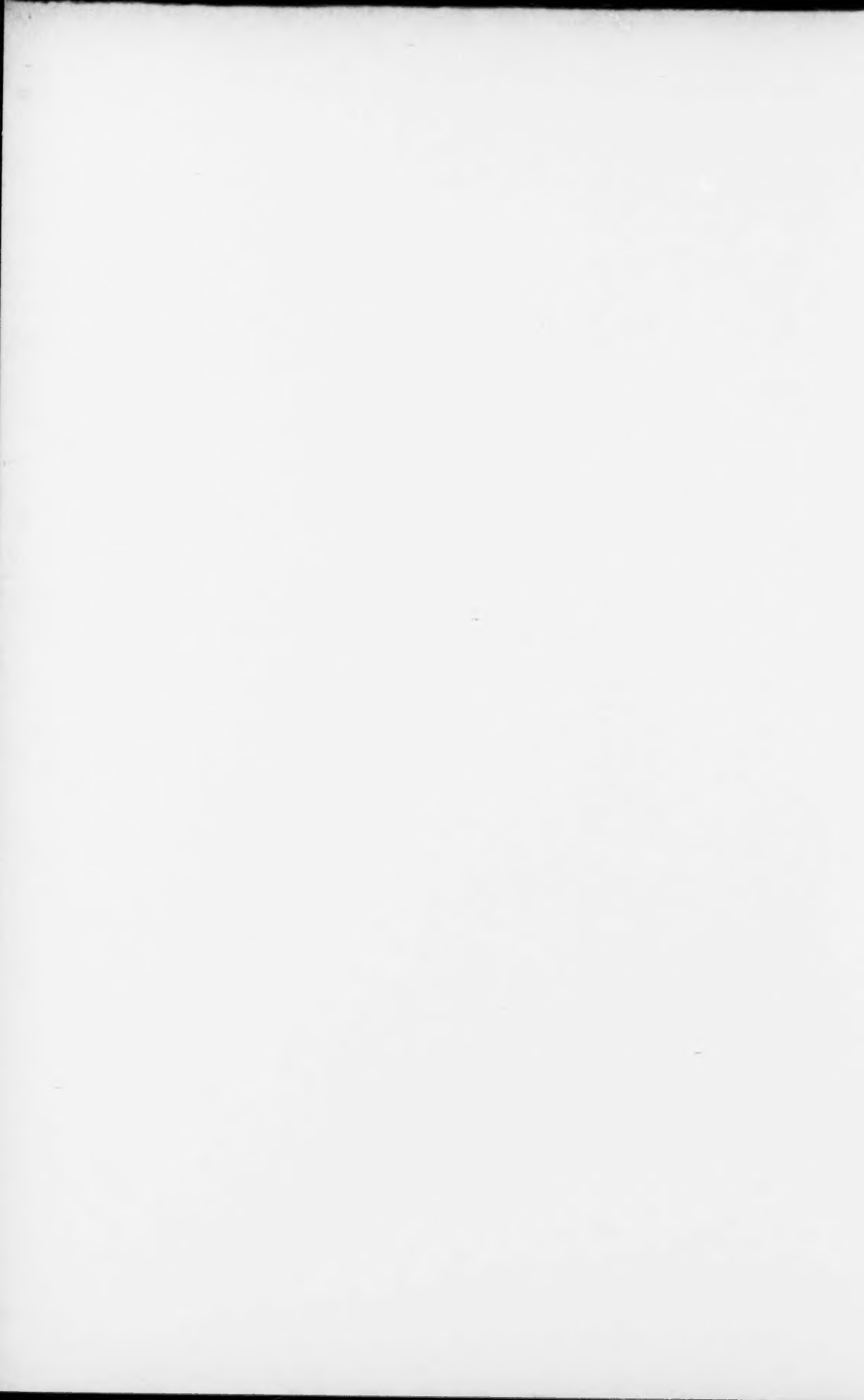


TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES	ii
PETITIONER'S REPLY TO BRIEF IN OPPOSITION	1
The plain terms of the injunction of the District Court of Boulder County, Colorado bars Petitioner from proceeding pro se in a defensive posture, and that is precisely what has happened in a case	1
The injunction prevents meaningful access to the courts.	2
No "unique circumstances" justify the lower court's injunction	3
Trial judge proceeded in willful violation of order disqualifying him	7
Tenth circuit judge who wrote the opinion was disqualified	8
Injunction shields Respondent's continued fraud in courts	10

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases:

<i>Board of Regents of the University of Colorado v. Uberoi</i> , 88 F 1325 (D. Colo. 1988)	5
<i>Bounds v. Smith</i> , 430 U.S. 817 (1977)	3
<i>Davis v. City of Charleston, MO.</i> , 827 F.2d 317 (8th Cir. 1987)	5
<i>In re Martin-Trigona</i> , 737 F.2d 1254 (2d Cir. 1984)	3
<i>Johnson v. Avery</i> , 393 U.S. 483 (1969)	3
<i>Liljeberg v. Health Services Acquisition Corp.</i> , 486 U.S. 847 (1988)	8
<i>Martin v. King</i> , 417 F.2d 458, 461 (10th Cir. 1986)	8
<i>McCuin v. Texas Power & Light Co.</i> , 714 F.2d 1255, 1261 (5th Cir. 1983)	7
<i>People v. Carter</i> , 678 F. Supp. 1484 (D. Colo. 1986)	2
<i>Scheuer v. Rhodes</i> , 416 U.S. 232, 236 (1974)	8
<i>Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. Bd. of Regents, et al.</i> , Boulder County, Colo. No. 83 CV 625, Div. 5	10
<i>Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. et al.</i> , 82 M/LW 806 (U.S. Dist. Ct., Colo. 1982)	4, 6, 8, 9
<i>Uberoi v. University of Colorado Board of Regents, et al.</i> , No. 85 CV 2080, Dist. Ct., Boulder Cty, Colo., Div. 2	1

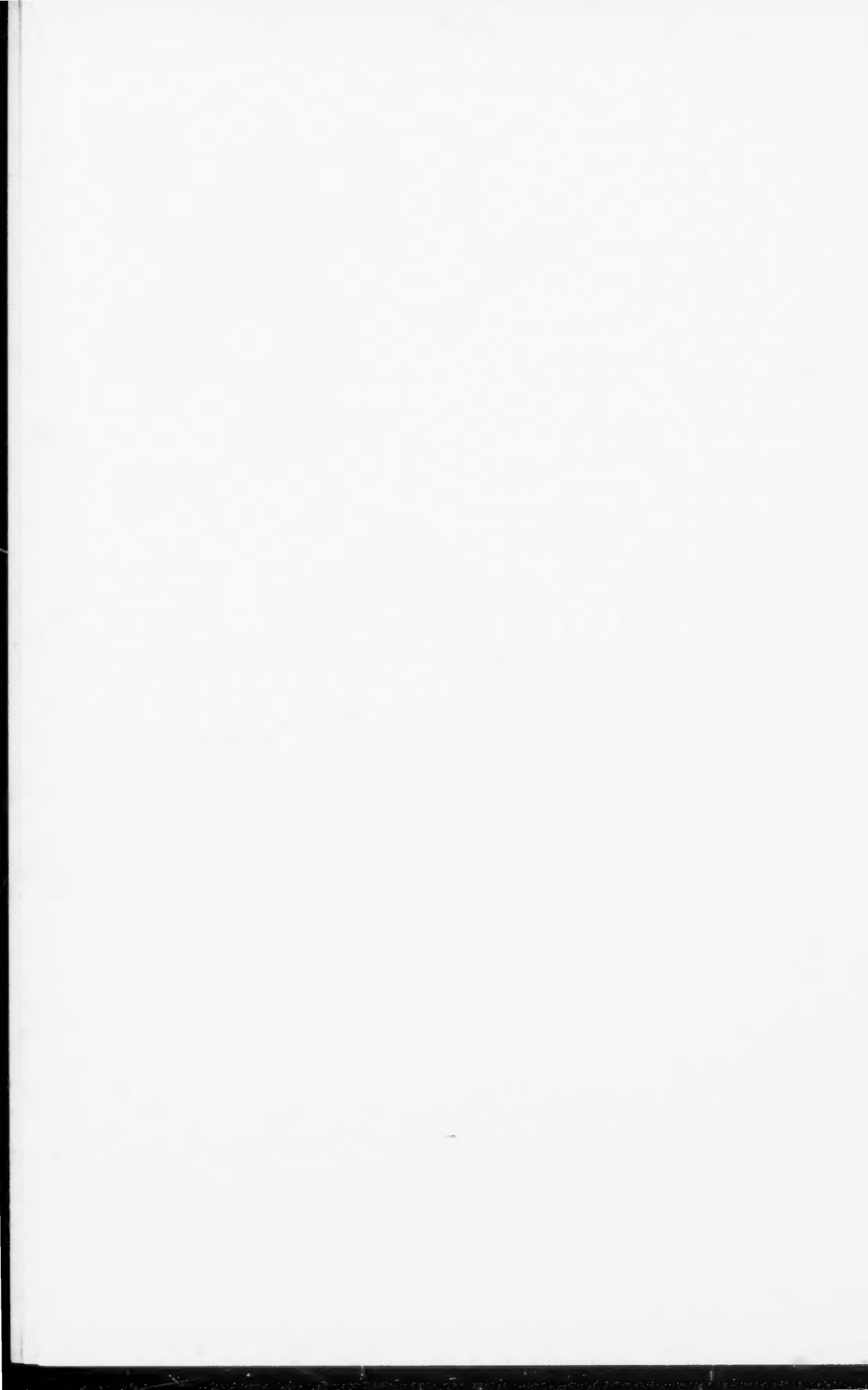
<i>University of Colorado v. Uberoi</i> , No. 88-F-1323 (D. Colo. Sept. 25, 1989); <i>aff'd</i> , Nos. 89-1117, 89-1304, 89-1337 (10th Cir. May 25, 1990)	2, 7, 8
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Statutes:

18 U.S.C. §201	6
28 U.S.C. §292(b)	6, 7, 9
28 U.S.C. §455(a)	7, 8
Fed. R. Civ. P. 77	7
Rule 60(b)	8, 9

Other:

Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedure, <i>Vol. III, Ch. XIV</i>	7
<i>Tenth Cir. Rule 34.1.8(c)</i>	9



PETITIONER'S REPLY TO BRIEF IN OPPOSITION

I.

The plain terms of the injunction of the District Court of Boulder County, Colorado bars Petitioner from proceeding pro se in a defensive posture, and that is precisely what has happened in a case.

Respondent argues that the lower court has not enjoined petitioner from representing himself in a defensive posture (Resp. Br. 5-7). However, the plain terms of the injunction are that petitioner is enjoined from "filing any paper work of any nature in any current or future pending case" and "from representing himself in any manner in XX Judicial district." Petition at a1-a3.

Moreover, another court in the judicial district where the injunction applies, has ruled that petitioner may *not* represent himself when respondent seeks an award of attorney's fees against him. *Uberoi v. University of Colorado Board of Regents, et al.*, No. 85 CV 2080, Dist. Ct., Boulder Cty, Colo., Div. 2. Specifically, respondent moved for an award of attorney's fees and the court scheduled a hearing. Thereafter, petitioner moved that he be allowed to defend himself against an award of fees, arguing that the Fourteenth Amendment's prohibition against deprivation of property without due process required that he be allowed to represent himself against the University's effort to obtain a money judgment against him. The court ruled that petitioner must retain a licensed attorney if he wanted to be heard at the fees hearing and resolved petitioner's motion for *pro se* representation by scrawling "motion denied" on the motion. See a facsimile of this order in the appendix hereto.

Therefore, there can be no question that the injunction at issue here prohibits petitioner from representing himself, not only as a proponent of a claim, but defensively as well. That prohibition violates petitioner's rights of access to the courts and due process and, therefore, warrants review by this Court.

II.

The injunction prevents meaningful access to the courts.

Respondent claims that the Colorado court's injunction does not prevent petitioner's meaningful access to the courts, and then reviews the methods used by various courts to curb litigation abuse (Resp. Br. 7-10). What respondent does not mention, however, is that, with the exception of the Colorado state courts and two other federal district court cases from Colorado, decided by the same district judge, one involving this petitioner, *see People v. Carter*, 678 F. Supp. 1484 (D. Colo. 1986); *University of Colorado v. Uberoi*, No. 88-F-1323 (D. Colo. Sept. 25, 1989), *aff'd*, Nos. 89-1117, 89-1304, 89-1337 (10th Cir. May 25, 1990), *no court* has enjoined any litigant, indigent or not, from all *pro se* litigation in perpetuity. But that is precisely what the lower courts have done here.

Assuming, *arguendo*, that petitioner abused the litigation process;¹ As respondent itself has noted (Resp. Br.

¹ Petitioner has brought only four lawsuits against respondent, each of which advanced public interest, at least in some respects, e.g.: Case 1: *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo.*, 686 P.2d 785 (Colo. 1984), with two justices listening, held that Colorado Open Records Act does not apply to the University. Within weeks, the legislature amended the statute to encompass the University. Case 2: *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo.*, 713 P.2d 894 (Colo. 1986) held that officials of the University sued in their individual capacities and the university itself are "persons" under 42 U.S.C. §1983 and

8-9), most courts have used other methods, primarily pre-filing screening, to deal with litigation abuse by *pro se* litigants. Since the lower courts have here never even attempted any such less restrictive methods, it raises the question whether the injunction violates petitioner's right of access to the courts. This is so not only because of this Court's precedents in the access to the courts area, *see, e.g., Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817 (1977); *Johnson v. Avery*, 393 U.S. 483 (1969), but also because the right of self-representation is one of constitutional dimension that may be infringed only in the most circumspect manner. *See* Br. of *Amicus Curiae* Public Citizen, at 6-7. Since the approach to litigation abuse taken by the Colorado courts differs vastly from that taken by most other courts, including most of the circuit courts of appeals, *see, e.g., In re Martin-Trigona*, 737 F.2d 1254 (2d Cir. 1984), this Court should grant review to provide guidance and to clarify this area of law.

III.

No "unique circumstances" justify the lower court's injunction

Respondent argues that "unique circumstances" justify the lower court's decision to bar petitioner, in perpetuity, from representing himself in the Twentieth Judicial District of Colorado, where he resides (Resp. Br. 10-12).

reinstated petitioner's civil rights claims against them. Case 3: *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. et al.*, 82 M/LW 806 (D. Colo. 1982). After a day-long hearing, court ruled there was sufficient evidence of respondent's fraud against U.S. Govt. and petitioner may pursue his action under Federal False Claims Act. Case 4: *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo., et al.*, 85 CV 2080, Boulder County Dist. Ct. Colo. ordered respondent to disclose public records to petitioner which were illegally concealed.

Resp. Br. Appendix 1 gives *partial* transcript of the hearing at which the injunction was issued. But it fails to include the following *crucial* part.

THE COURT: [A]t the last tally he had something like \$110-\$115,000 in attorney's fees assessed against him on the basis of frivolous and groundless actions. [Transcripts p. 78, l. 18]

MS. FULTON: No, your honor, I just would like to agree with Dr. Uberoi that he has one case [*Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. et al.*, 82 M/LW 806 (U.S. Dist. Ct., Colo. 1982)] that the Court included in the ruling, which accounts for \$75,000 of the slightly more than \$100,000 in attorney fees. The judgment was not--the attorney fees were not granted on the finding of frivolous and groundless. They were granted to us as a prevailing party after the case was dismissed for Dr. Uberoi's failure to require [comply] with discovery notice. Other than that I have nothing more to say.

THE COURT: All right. Thank you for that correction. [Transcript, p. 80, l.11]

Respondent confessed at trial that 82 M/LW was *not* frivolous.

In that case, petitioner alleged that respondent defrauded his and other research grants from U.S. Govt. and violated his civil rights because of his Asian Indian Origin. The docket sheet for 82 M/LW 806 was admitted into evidence at the trial and shows that the court thrice ordered petitioner to prepare pretrial order and compelled him to prepare one even though respondent had not even answered the complaint.

Petitioner specifically requested a ruling whether petitioner, not a licensed attorney, may pursue *pro se* the *qui tam* action under Federal False Claims Act considering that respondent had defrauded him and the government.

After 3 years, Judge West held all-day hearing and ruled that there was sufficient evidence of fraud and petitioner may proceed *pro se*. He later granted summary judgment for respondent since petitioner may not pursue the *qui tam* claim without a licensed attorney, and he refused to separate the claim, relate it back to 1982 and permit a licensed attorney to enter an appearance on petitioner's behalf in the separated claim.

He set discovery deadline even before respondent had answered the complaint and dismissed the civil rights claims for failure to complete discovery. He awarded respondent its attorney fees which were mainly for its defense of action under False Claims Act which mandates that an informer with meritorious claims, as petitioner's, should be rewarded.

Moreover, respondent was not entitled to attorney fees for its defense of civil rights claims since they were *not* frivolous. *Davis v. City of Charleston, MO.*, 827 F.2d 317 (8th Cir. 1987).

Resp. Br. at B1-B13 shows that *Bd. of Regents of the Univ. of Colo. v. Uberoi*, 88 F 1325 (D. Colo. 1988) sought to permanently enjoin petitioner from appearing *pro se* in U.S. Dist. Ct. for Dist. of Colo. because he had filed a frivolous action, 82 M/LW 806, in the district.

In the very early stages of the case, respondent gave honorary degree of doctor of laws to trial judge Sherman G. Finesilver. President of the University at his house entertained the judge for lunch. He and his six relatives were entertained at cocktails and buffet in the evening. A

professional photographer photographed them and the award of the honorary degree. Respondent gave the judge eleven (11) large color photographs, showing different poses of the judge, his relatives, and the ceremony, as gifts.

The judge wrote to the President that, "I shall endeavor within my power...to continue to contribute to the good name of our University."

Respondent gave Judge Finesilver "things of value" and in return he vowed to advance its good name, i.e., to favor it in the case before him. It violated 18 U.S.C. §201, Bribery of public officials.

Petitioner further discovered that in 1980, a joint committee of Regents and faculty of the University had rejected Judge Finesilver's application for the honorary degree.

82 M/LW 806 was assigned to Judge Richard P. Matsch. After more than three years, he ruled that he and all other district judges of District of Colorado were disqualified since one of the defendants, Jim Carrigan, is now a judge of the court, although he is sued for his conduct before he became a judge. And Chief District Judge Finesilver should seek assignment of another judge, from outside the District of Colorado, to the case in *accordance with established procedure*.

Judge Finesilver selected Judge Lee R. West of Western District of Oklahoma to handle the case and told Chief Judge of the Tenth Circuit to make the designation required under 28 U.S.C. §292(b) and the latter obliged. Judge Finesilver violated several provisions of law and *established procedure*.

(1) He usurped the authority of Chief Circuit Judge who has exclusive jurisdiction to make intracircuit assignments of district judges under §292(b).

(2) Since he was disqualified to try the case under 28 U.S.C. §455(a) he was also disqualified to select another judge to try the case. *McCuin v. Texas Power & Light Co.*, 714 F.2d 1255, 1261 (5th Cir. 1983).

(3) *Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedure*, Vol. III, Ch. XIV specifically states:

To avoid the appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest, judges of the borrowing circuit, once disqualified, should not participate in the selection of the visiting judge or judges.

The same rationale and procedure applies to intracircuit assignments.

The designation and the correspondence showing that Judge Finesilver had selected Judge West to handle *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo.*, *supra*, was filed, and docket sheet of the case shows that copies of them were not mailed to petitioner, in violation of Fed. R. Civ. P. 77, in order to prevent the petitioner from discovering the illegal assignment of the case to Judge West.

Petitioner has no confidence that respondent's case *Bd. of Regents of the Univ. of Colo. v. Uberoi*, 88 F 1323 (D.Colo.) was not funneled to Judge Finesilver.

Trial judge proceeded in willful violation of order disqualifying him

Upon discovering that *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. et al.*, 82 M/LW 806 (D.Colo.) was assigned to Judge West in

violation of 28 U.S.C. §455(a), petitioner in *Bd. of Regents of the Univ. of Colo. v. Uberoi*, 88 F 1323 (D. Colo.) filed motion for vacatur in 82 M/LW 806 under Rule 60(b)(6) citing *Liljeberg v. Health Services Acquisition Corp.*, 486 U.S. 847 (1988). He also filed motion to disqualify Judge Finesilver from resolving the motion for vacatur. Petitioner stated that Judge Finesilver was required to follow Judge Matsch's order disqualifying all judges of the district, including Finesilver, from trying any aspect of 82 M/LW 806.

Judge Finesilver instantly resolved the motions with one word "DENIED."

The allegations in Rule 60(b)(6) motion should be considered as allegations in an independent action and must be taken as true when denying the motion or dismissing the action. *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232, 236 (1974); *Martin v. King*, 417 F.2d 458, 461 (10th Cir. 1986).

Tenth circuit judge who wrote the opinion was disqualified

Opposition brief in Appendix 3 cites order and judgement in *Bd. of Regents of the Univ. of Colo. v. Uberoi*, (10th Cir. Nos. 89-1117, 89-1304, 89-1337) written by John P. Moore. The consolidated case appealed the injunction, dismissal of petitioner's counterclaims *and* dismissal of Rule 60(b)(6) motion to vacate the judgment in *Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. et al.*, 82 M/LW 806 in which district Judge Jim Carrigan is a defendant for his conduct before becoming a judge. Moore had recently served with Carrigan as a district judge in District of Colorado, before Moore was appointed a circuit judge.

Judge Moore was clearly disqualified under 28 U.S.C. §455(a) for appearance of partiality. He avoided this by ignoring the appeal of the denial of Rule 60 motion.

On petition for rehearing, Judge Moore ruled that he inadvertently overlooked the appeal of denial of the Rule 60 motion even though petitioner's appellate brief was largely devoted to it. He ruled that it was harmless error when disqualified Dist. Judge Finesilver handled the Rule 60 motion and denied it, because there was not basis for it since disqualified Judge Finesilver "merely determined the availability of Judge West and reported it to [Chief Circuit] Judge Holloway in accordance with regular system of reassignment."

In fact, disqualified Judge Finesilver *selected* Judge West to handle 82 M/LW 806 and *told* Judge Holloway to make the designation required under 28 U.S.C. §292(b). Judge Holloway responded that he does not need to do anything since a *previous* designation of Judge West to serve in District of Colorado in *another* matter refers to cases and adequately covers 82 M/LW 806 as well.

Moreover the *absolute rule* is that a disqualified judge's decisions are null and void whether or not he otherwise committed any other reversible error.

Tenth Cir. Rule 34.1.8(c) states:

Oral argument will be allowed in all cases unless a panel of three judges, after examination of the briefs and the records, shall be unanimously of the opinion that oral argument is not needed.

Petitioner was not allowed oral argument and neither in Order and Judgment nor in the Order on Rehearing is there the determination required under the rule that oral argument is not needed.

Injunction shields Respondent's continued fraud in courts

Uberoi v. Univ. of Colo. Bd. of Regents, et al., Boulder County, Colo. No. 83 CV 625, Div. 5 awarded respondent its costs. It fraudulently garnished petitioner's wages for cost of petitioner's deposition when he was never deposed. Petitioner moved to sanction respondent. The court denied the motion because the injunction prohibits petitioner from filing any paper.

Respondent did not deny its misconduct but moved the court to "impose a fine upon Plaintiff Uberoi of not less than \$50,000 and sentence him to imprisonment for a term not less than six months" for violation of the injunction.

"Unique circumstances" are that respondent defrauded U.S. Govt. and petitioner, violated his civil rights, filed fraudulent affidavits in courts, illegally influenced trial judge and got attorney's fees for its defense of such conduct, continues to retaliate against petitioner by prohibiting him from doing any teaching or research in spite of his tenured professorship and has succeeded in enjoining him from seeking any relief from respondent's continuing illegal and immoral conduct.

WHEREFORE, petition for certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

Mahinder S. Uberoi, *pro se*

DISTRICT COURT, BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

Case No. 85 CV 2080-2

MAHINDER S. UBEROI,

v.

Plaintiff,

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOARD OF REGENTS, et al.,

Defendants

MOTION TO PERMIT UBEROI TO FULLY REPRESENT HIMSELF IN PROCEEDINGS TO TAX ATTORNEY FEES AND COSTS AGAINST HIM.

1. The Court has entered final judgment on the merits which is appealable regardless of any unresolved issue of attorney fees. Baldwin v. Bright Mortgage Co., 757 P.2d 1072 (Colo. 1988). The judgment has been appealed to Colorado Supreme Court, Case No. 89 SA 228. The proceedings to tax attorney fees and costs against Uberoi are separate proceedings in which he is appearing in a defensive position. Notwithstanding any orders of Judge Roxanne Bailin and/or Morris W. Sandstead, Jr. the Court lacks jurisdiction to prevent Uberoi from appearing pro se in a defensive position relating to claims against him for costs and attorneys' fees since it would violate U.S. Const. Amend. V. No person shall be . . . deprived of life, liberty and property, without due process. Amend. XIV. No state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of law; it would also violate Colo. Const. Art. II. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.

2. In Board of County Commissioners of the County of Boulder v. Bardey, 594 P.2d 1057. (Colo. 1979), the Supreme Court enjoined a person from appearing as a pro se plaintiff in suits relating to his marital difficulties. The Court specifically held that:

[he] is still free to appear pro se in his own defense. Thus, this injunction works no infringement on respondent's constitutional rights. [Emphasis in the original, at 1059].

3. In Shotkin et al. v. Kaplan et al., 180 P.2d 1021 (Colo. 194), the Supreme Court enjoined Shotkin from appearing as a pro se plaintiff. The court specifically held that:

There is not involved here the right of a party to represent himself when made defendant or defendant in error. At 1022.

4. The Court should consider this motion as an emergency application and immediately enter a ruling so that, if necessary, Plaintiff may seek relief from Colorado Supreme Court.

5. A copy of this motion is being served on Clerk of Division 2 so that it is brought to Judge Morris W. Sandstead Jr.'s attention as an emergency application. Exhibit A.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that the Court grant permission to Uberoi to fully represent himself in proceedings to tax costs and attorney fees against him and that the court provide such further and additional relief it deems just and proper.

Dated: August 15, 1989

Respectfully submitted,

BY Mahinder S. Uberoi
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816 Sixth Street
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442-2879

AVAILABLE COPY